

LOST DAVIE.

BY GEORGE JAY VARNEY.

OUT of a village, and up a great hill, a little boy trudged on with his father. Straight on before them went their road, but about them they saw others sweeping down dark valleys and winding up high hills; for they were in Switzerland, the land of mountains.

"Keep just on this road, Davie, till ye get ayont the bridge, and then turn left; and dinna ye stop to play," said the father.

They shook hands and parted, Davie going on, while his father went back to the village.

"But do they speak Scotch in Switzerland?" asks my critical young friends.

Ah! wait a little, and we will see how this happens. After his father left him, Davie kept gayly on his journey; sometimes whistling to the goldfinches that fed on the thistle seeds and the berries of the juniper trees, or throwing stones at the jays and nut-hatches that flew about among the acorns and beechnuts. The village he had left was far away below, and he was now going along between two high mountains. Away up on the rocky sides of the nearest one, he could see the nimble goats feeding, and few flocks of sheep lower down. Then somebody away up above the goats began to sing.

When one stanza was finished, somebody on the opposite mountain answered back with another stanza in the same tune. For a long time Davie heard their clear voices sounding above him, from mountain to mountain. They were shepherds, and it was their business to stay up there to watch the flocks of sheep and goats, that they might not be lost, or destroyed by the wolves that lived in the wilder parts of the mountains.

Then he came to a bridge over a deep chasm, where, a hundred feet underneath,

the swift little river rushed through. Down below him the tiny wrens were chattering among the stunted twisted trees, and flitting about the ferns and red and yellow leaves of the vines that grew in the crevices of the steep rocks. Davie stayed there a long time, trying to hit the scolding wrens, and watching the stones he threw at them splash up the water. At last a kingfisher flew along beneath the bridge, his shrill clattering cry making such loud echoes come up from the rocks, that Davie expected to see whole armies of some wild creatures or other rush out; and he turned and hurried on his way.

Pretty soon he saw a brown and white animal hop out from a clump of bushes, into the road ahead of him. Davie felt rather afraid, for he was all alone. He picked up a stick, and went on cautiously. The little creature didn't seem to notice him, but went playing along the roadside, nibbling at sorrel and clover leaves. He had long ears that sometimes stuck straight up, and sometimes laid back over his shoulders. But the young chap saw Davie, and ran along the road. Davie knew it was a leveret now; and he ran after him as fast as he could, and almost caught up with him. But the running put him out of breath, and he dodged behind a bush at the roadside. The leveret didn't hear him coming now, and stopped to look around.

"I think I'll catch him this time," said Davie to himself; and he crept up close to him. But the leveret heard him, and looked about, winking his big eyes; then he took some very long leaps, and Davie hid again. The frightened little animal ran a great distance before he stopped, and Davie was a long time creeping up to him. This time he threw his stick at the leveret; which, instead of running along the road, went

through the old fence, and among the rocks and bushes, out of sight. Davie looked over the fence. "Well! ye may gang; I dinna want ye," said he; and he turned back to the road and continued his journey. The sun was behind the mountains, and the way was getting shadowy, and everything looked strange, too. Davie didn't remember to have seen that great broken tree, that great threatening rock, nor the houses along the road either. So he hurried on to find something that he had seen before. First, he met a little girl with long eyelashes, driving a flock of geese. The geese scolded, and ran at Davie, putting out their long necks. Then they would cackle among themselves, as if they were saying, "What a miserable little outlandish fellow he is, isn't he? Let's give him a good fright." Then they would run and hiss again; knocking their heads together whenever they turned, their necks were so long.

He went over a little brook, and a marmot scampered under the bridge. He got down and looked along the water-course under the road, but the marmot had hidden among the stones.

Soon after he met a flock of goats, driven home by their owner. They looked very impish, with their bright eyes and long beards; and the young goats ran up to him and wanted to play. Davie ran away from the goats; but the way was getting darker and darker, so that he could see nothing down in the valley except the gleaming river. He was sure that he was on the wrong road. Pretty soon a man came along with a flock of sheep.

"Where be Mettendorf?" asked Davie, in broad Scotch.

The man looked surprised, but pointed over the height of the mountain.

"Do this road come there?" continued Davie.

"*Nicht verstehe!*" answered the man. This means, "don't understand;" but it was German, which is the language of the people of this canton, and Davie didn't know what the Switzer meant. Davie knew a little French, and he tried that.

"*Ich kann nicht verstehe,*" replied the Swiss man. And Davie had to go on without finding out anything. It was quite dark when he came to the edge of a little cluster of houses.

Here he met an old woman; and he asked her in French, and then in Scotch, where

Mettendorf was. She jabbered away a long time, asking questions with words that Davie didn't know, and never heard before. She kept pointing along the street toward a house with a roof a good deal too broad for it on the front side.

As Davie left her and went along, the big tears began to come in his eyes, for he was hungry and tired. Then he thought if he could find a place to stay all night, he could go back in the morning, and find the road he had missed. He saw a signboard of the shape of a great bottle, hanging on a pole before the house the old woman had pointed at.

There were letters on the sign, but so worn and faded that Davie could not read them. Underneath the long eaves were two benches, and Davie sat down to rest. There were loud voices and laughter inside, and Davie was afraid to go in. Then he thought he must go in, or he would have to stay out all night. As he opened the door a dim light from a couple of candles showed him a lot of men, some sitting, some standing, and all with a glass or mug of some drink or other.

The fat landlord caught sight of Davie, and inquired what he wanted.

"I want some supper," said Davie.

"*Nicht verstehe,*" replied the landlord, just as the man with the sheep had done. Davie tried French with no better success. He had come where his voice would do him no good. He was no better off than if he were deaf and dumb. He was going to cry again, but he thought of the deaf and dumb talk; so he tried signs.

He put his finger into his mouth and made believe eat it; then he put his hand in his pocket, and brought out several silver coins, and showed them. The landlord understood that. He nodded his head at Davie, and went out. Pretty soon he came back, and, taking hold of Davie's jacket with his thumb and finger, led him into another room. Here was a table with food and drink, and Davie sat down and had a good supper.

After supper, a sleek pleasant man came in, and the landlord talked with him, pointing at Davie. Then the fat sleek man talked to Davie in three or four languages that Davie didn't know. Then he asked in French where he lived.

"In Scotland," said Davie, quick as you could wink.

"And how came you here?" questioned the man.

"Daddie sent me home to mither, an' I lost the road."

"Where are your father and mother?"

"Mither's in Mettendorf, an' I want to go there," said Davie, beginning to cry.

"Don't cry, my good little boy," said the man, kindly; "you shall go to your mother. Where is your father?"

"At Maisterstahl, putting looms up," answered Davie.

"What are they for?" asked the man.

"To weave with in the mill," he replied.

"So your father came over to put up machinery, did he?"

Then the man took Davie to the barroom, and told the landlord that it was a little boy from far away Scotland, who had lost his way among the hills.

And the people were full of wonder and delight; taking hold of Davie and turning him round, and looking him all over. It was such a thing as had never happened before; and they were as much pleased as the boys here would be to see a little Turk. They all tried to get him to take a drink from their mugs and glasses; and he had to sip a little from each, and altogether it was so much that he felt light-headed.

The smooth pleasant man now shook hands with Davie, and told him he was the parish priest, and he would see him again in the morning. When the priest went away, Davie laid down on a bench by a great square oven or stove of brick; for he was very sleepy and tired. The landlord saw what he wanted, and taking a candle, beckoned Davie to follow him. He led the way up a flight of stairs that crooked and turned to right and left, coming at last to a neat little room where there was a nice big bed. The landlord pointing to the bed, said, "*Guten nacht, meine knabe,*" and left him

alone. There was a great quilt or coverlet on the bed as thick as his arm was long, and Davie wondered how he was going to get under that. He took hold of it with all his strength, and was greatly surprised to find it light and soft as a feather. That was the last thing he remembered till the sun shone into his sleepy eyes in the morning. He was afraid he never should find his way down those crooked stairs; but, somehow, he was presently down below eating a nice breakfast. Then he began to fear that he wouldn't have money enough to pay for all, supper, bed and breakfast; and he felt frightened and homesick. Then the kind priest came in with a man who was to guide him back to his mother. When Davie wanted to pay for what he had received, the jolly landlord would not take a penny, saying it was pay enough to have a little boy all the way from Scotland in his house.

His guide led him right over the mountain, a much shorter way than the road by which he came. But there was no road by the way they went, only a footpath. The dew was still on the leaves of the shrubs, as they climbed along the steep ways, and the birds were singing, and the goats already browsing among the rocks. At length they came to a high part of the mountain, where they could see to the opposite side. The guide stopped suddenly, looked at Davie, and pointed down the valley before them.

"Mettendorf!" he said.

Davie could see nothing at all in the valley, at first, except the thick morning mist; not a house, rock or tree. At last he caught sight of a glimmering steeple, and, pointing at it, looked at the guide, who nodded his head, and said again, "Mettendorf."

The guide went with him almost to the village, then he went back over the mountain; and in a few minutes Davie had got back to his anxious mother.

LOVE AND GHERKINS.

BY FREDERICK H. DEWEY.

"I never told you, did I, Charley," inquired my friend, Major Tresbottle, one hot afternoon, as we lolled over the bar at Cartwell's, individually occupied in discussing a cobbler and julep, and languidly watching the street-sprinkler keeping the uneven tenor of its way up and down the street,—"no, I am sure I never told you how a pickle saved me from matrimony."

"Saved you from matrimony!" I exclaimed. "Debarred, you mean."

"Either, or both, as you please," responded the major, with a nonchalance I never could hope of attaining. "It is all past long ago. — thirty or forty years behind, — a thing of the past. But it is never forgotten. The remembrance of that ridiculous scrape makes me blush even now, at six-and-forty, and I used to curse that pickle once a week on a fair average; but now, as I glide along the placid current of middle-life, I look back upon the occurrence with calm regret, — nothing more."

"And have you had more than one love affair, then, major?"

"I have had several," replied that ex-official calmly.

"Let's have it, major."

"Dry wheels don't run smoothly, Charley," suggested the major, with a glance at his empty glass.

I motioned to the mustached gentleman who stood behind the massive bar resplendent in the snowiest of shirts, most extensive of pins, and daintiest of studs, and said, with deferential meekness, —

"A couple of cobblers, if you please, sir."

Thanks to the dexterity of the fashionable gentleman at Cartwell's, — a suave dexterity I have never seen surpassed, — the desired draughts were ready in a trice, and shortly embellished the bar; and, taking his glass daintily between his thumb and forefinger, the major began thus: —

"Have you ever been in Rochester, Charley. — Rochester, the beautiful, the ugly, the hot and cold, the gay and stupid; where the girls are unsurpassed for beauty and homeliness, and the young men for spending thousands and hoarding dimes? I say,

Charley, have you ever been in Rochester?"

"I have not."

"Then you don't know old Magnum, of East Avenue, who owns half the town?"

"Have n't that exquisite delight."

"Nor the Misses Magnum, Emily, Eunice, and Alice, — the latter especially? Then let me tell you that you have yet to see the three graces, beauty, wit, and money. Ah! there are attractions for you. But I forget; that was years ago. They are old and ugly now."

"Tell me all about it, major. — Sir, will you give us a couple of cigars?"

The fashionable gentleman previously mentioned slung the box adown the bar with a precise velocity only acquired by long and cautious practice. After we had helped ourselves, the major resumed, —

"This was before I thought of going to West Point, Charley, and it changed the whole course of my life. Had it not been for a mere pickle, a cursed inch-and-a-half cucumber, soaked in brine and vinegar, I would now be a staid, rich old merchant instead of being an ex-follower of the glorious profession of arms. But, as my friend Charley says several times in the course of a six-column story in the *Ninevah Sunday Courier*, let us not anticipate.

"You see, I was living at Auburn then, and having a rich maiden aunt residing at Rochester I kept up a desultory correspondence with her, sent her rare cats, poodles, canaries, and parrots, by the gross. And, *apropos* of parrots, did you ever hear the story of the German student and his parrot?"

"We will come to that in due time, without doubt, major," I said. "Now let us have your pickle story. I regret that at that early age you were so mercenary as to send presents to a rich maiden aunt."

"I came into her snug property about ten years ago," said the major, with calm complacency. "But to my story.

"You see, as I was a versatile, cosmopolitan little fellow then of sixteen or seventeen, I picked up an extensive acquaintance

among the young fellows, and soon had the run of Rochester society, — and there is none better in the United States. With an especial aptness at keeping a sharp eye on the *qui vive* for number one, I soon became on terms of close intimacy with the Magnum family, and particularly so with the lovely Alice, whose flashing black eyes, pearly teeth, and general beauty, together with her father's bank account, soon brought me to her feet as an acknowledged suitor."

"At sixteen!" I cried. "Major, you old wretch!"

"There is nothing ilke getting your hand in at an early age," said the major. "Besides, I had a tolerble mustache even then, and passed with every one for twenty, at least. Every one was well aware that I had great expectations regarding my aunt's property, which was second to none excepting that of Magnum; and that old fox saw my suit, winked at it, gave me one of his Havanas now and then, and went to visit my aunt.

"Well, Charley, I walked, talked, danced, sighed, rode, and cooed with the beautiful Alice, who was by no means averse to my attentions. I kept her supplied with sentimental novels from New York, and petted her confounded blue cat, — a most irascible feline, who scratched me once a day on a fair average. Everything went on swimmingly, and my ring was on the point of encircling Alice's taper finger, when a confoundedly good-looking cousin of hers came home from a German University, and immediately became my rival.

"Winslow Currier (that was his name), by some diabolical mischance, happened to be immensely rich; and rich in his own right, into the bargain. He had his money shrewdly invested, whereas mine was only prospective; and before he had been at Magnum's a week old Magnum had given me the cold shoulder, and was hand and glove with dashing Winslow Currier.

"The whole family, with the exception of Alice, seemed crazy after Beau Winslow. *Pater familias* gave up his morning paper to him, and insinuated that a very good thing might be done with a little ready cash in this direction or that, and kindly offered to show him how to double his money in stocks; *mater familias* insisted on his making her house his home, — would not hear of his going to a hotel, — and assigned him

the best chambers in the house; while the girls — why, they worked him a drawer full of slippers, embroidered countless handkerchiefs for him, petted and wheedled him; and Alice — well, I did n't overlike their stolen glances and covert promenades any better than I liked their continual propinquity. But I now called oftener than ever, and though having the exquisite pleasure of seeing that I had lost my prestige, and was rather tolerated than welcomed, my motto was, 'never give up the ship, and old Magnum's money-bags;' and, by doing my level best, held my own, and no more.

"It was neck and neck with Currier and me, — I soon saw that, — and, not a little anxious as well as curious to see how the affair would turn out, I applied myself with redoubled assiduity to maintain the ground I had now; in plainer parlance, to secure Alice, who was plainly in a state of vacillation, rather inclining toward Currier and the greater wealth."

Here the major paused to pull at his cobbler, and, having moistened his throat, he continued.

"Well, Charley, things were in this charming state when one evening I found myself sitting down to an elegant tea-table with the family, Beau Currier included, of course. By some chance, — I always thought the old woman (excuse my warm language) had something to do with it, — Alice was placed between Currier and me; and as neither of us had either of the other girls at our elbows we of course devoted ourselves to her.

"From the moment of sitting down I began to exert all my powers of fascination in a hot race with Currier, who kept up a running stream of small-talk on the other side, to which Alice paid an attentive ear, giving me only an odd moment's notice now and then. As for the family, why, damn me, it was 'Winslow' this, and 'Winslow' that; and 'What do you think of "Faust," Winslow?' and 'Is n't Nilsson charming?' and 'O Winslow! you 'll take me down the Bay Road in my new phaeton, Saturday, won't you, Winslow?' and 'Currier, how about that "Central" stock? are you going to invest, eh? You'd better. Excellent chance there, — one in ten thousand. I'm going in.' And 'Winslow, does your tea suit?' and 'You had better let me order a new set for your chamber.' Egad! young Tresbotle stood no chance at all, ignored as he was

by the whole table, with the family against him.

"Well, Charley, I put on a bold front, and determined to face the music, and never say die; but I was at last completely silenced, and for ten minutes did n't speak a word. Meanwhile Currier was doing great execution, with the whole family in hue and cry. At last *mater familias* spoke suddenly. —

"Winslow, we are going out to Cousin Frank's country-house next week, — a lovely place. Won't you join us?"

"With all my heart," said Currier.

"Heretofore I had always received a similar invitation, and of course expected one now; but, to my overwhelming astonishment, none came. I looked from one to another in surprise, and fancied I detected a triumphant smile flickering about Mrs. Magnum's merciless lips.

"For me, Charley, that was almost a settler. Nothing now but a superhuman effort could restore to me the prestige so ignobly lost. I was snubbed; outrageously snubbed. My heart beat like a trip-hammer, and the blood of mortification rushed to my face. For a moment or two all was silence. All stared at their tea-cups, and laughed in their sleeves at poor me. Alice reddened, and studiously analyzed the pattern of the carpet. I felt like sinking through the floor, or rushing from the house; but by a superhuman effort at self-control I kept my seat.

"Just then the servant brought in a small dish of gherkins, — the very little fellows, you know. They were passed, but no one took. I was so embarrassed I scarcely knew what I was doing, when I took one, and commenced to cut it ferociously.

"You know these little silver tea-knives, Charley, — little, dull, detestable things, fit for nothing, much less for cutting! Under ordinary circumstances I would not have attempted to cut with one of them, — for I knew better; but, hot and furious, I drove my fork into the gherkin, and hacked away with my knife.

"Confound these little tea-knives! will they never be discarded? They hang on like bad sixpences. The knife, never made for cutting, slipped, of course, and presto! away went my sauce — I believe it was blackberry — into Alice's lap, all over her costly white dress, while the gherkin flew like a flash of lightning across the table into Magnum's eye!

"'Mercy!' cried Alice, starting to her feet with a scream. 'Confounded awkward!' roared Magnum, stamping about the room with his eye full of salt vinegar. 'O Heaven! my eye! my eye!' 'Well, did you ever!' said Miss Eunice, with a glance of scorn at poor me. 'Well, I never!' chimed Emily, turning up her delicate nose. Currier sneered, and assisted Alice, who gave me a look of undisguised abhorrence. Mrs. Magnum rolled her eyes, and clasped her hands. The servants coughed, and vainly endeavored to look unconscious; — fifty times more polite than their betters.

"I blushed and tingled for a moment, then, feeling as if I had committed the most atrocious crime in the calendar, rose to my feet.

"'I beg — beg — implore your forgiveness, Alice' —

"'Miss Magnum, if you please,' said Alice, bowing icily.

"'It was entirely an accident, I assure you' —

"'Oh, we know 't was an accident, young Tresbottle,' interrupted Magnum, with a glance of his twinkling eye that made me shudder, swimming as it was in tears, vinegar, and brine.

"'Dear Winslow,' murmured Alice, resting her hand on Currier's shoulder, 'will you give me your arm?'

"And out they went, leaving me in a state of mind more easily imagined than described.

"When I got out into the street, Charley, — I don't exactly know how I got there, for at that point is an hiatus in the memory of my youthful days, — I went down to Kimball's, and, shutting myself in a stall, got — well, obviously intoxicated for the first time in my life. I am ashamed to acknowledge it; but my condition and state of mind demanded a period of forgetfulness, don't you see? — a draught of the waters of Lethe, as it were.

"In the morning I took the first train to Auburn, and did not again visit Rochester until Currier and Alice had been united five years, and rejoiced in several children. Mr. Magnum died about ten years ago, and Currier got fully two-thirds of his wealth, and is richer than ever today. It might have been mine but for that detestable gherkin. I have hated the sight of a pickle ever since."

"And no wonder," I said.

LOVE IN THE DARK.

AN INCIDENT OF THE CENTENNIAL EXHIBITION.

BY ANNA MORRIS.

"O come, girls, do stop that banging, and spin me a yarn about the Centennial." This from Dick Ashleigh, as with the help of a cane, he limped slowly into the cheerful parlor where his sisters were practising a duet.

The girls cast a rueful look at "Les Dames de Seville," but nevertheless rose obediently from the piano, and approached the easy-chair into which the young autocrat had thrown himself, for poor Dick had met with an accident the very week that he had anticipated seeing the Centennial for himself, and although there was now every hope that he would eventually quite recover, yet there had been many weary weeks

of suffering, lasting until all the glories of the great exhibition were at an end.

His sisters had visited Philadelphia, however—indeed were there when Dick's accident happened, and his desire to hear of everything that they had heard and seen, seemed perfectly insatiable.

"I can't think of a thing to tell about, Dick," said Julie, the elder sister. "I have ransacked my brains so often for a new description for you, that there is 'not an idea left in there. Let me see! I told you of the mosaics, and the carvings, and the Bryant vase, and the splendid glass and china—"

"And the lovely dresses, and the magnifi-

cent diamonds, and how becoming you thought they would be to you," interposed her brother rather maliciously. "O yes, Julie, I have heard all that over and over—and what you had to eat, and what a 'horrid crowd' there was, and how that 'hateful woman' stepped on your dress. Served you right for having it trailing on the ground! I don't want all those stories over again. I want something new. If you can't tell anything, I know Lettie can, by the look in her eyes. So hurry up, Lettie, and let's hear what it's about."

Thus commanded, shy little Lettie looked up rather confusedly. "The fact is, Dick, I can only remember one thing that I have not told you."

"Well, that's all I asked for," interrupted Dick.

"And that I don't think I can tell—and besides I don't know the end of it."

"Then let's have the beginning, or if you don't know that, the middle," laughed Dick. "This sounds interesting, Lettie. That's the reason you think you can't tell it," he continued, pulling her down on to the low ottoman beside him. "Don't you know you always tell me everything?"

"But Julie will laugh so at me," hesitated Lettie. "She says I am always imagining foolish things."

"Never mind," answered Dick, with a lordly air. "Julie sha'n't laugh this time. If she does we'll make her tell the next story. Now, Julie, drop the curtains, and stir up the fire. Don't ring for lights. Lettie can talk better in the dark. Sit down on the ottoman at the other side of the fire, Julie. Now, Lettie, proceed!"

"Well, you see, Dick," began poor Lettie, nervously twisting her curls over her slender fingers, "perhaps I oughtn't to have overheard this, and yet I couldn't help it. So I thought the best way would be not to say anything about it, and I never did, even to Julie."

"Why, Lettie Ashleigh, I am ashamed of you," broke in Julie, half indignantly, "when I told you every single thing I saw all the time I was gone."

"No matter," cried Dick, impatiently. "Don't you understand, she didn't see this—she heard it!"

"And I didn't mean to tell you now," continued Lettie. "Only you said you saw it in my eyes, Dick."

"O yes," said Dick, stifling a laugh at

Lettie's innocent belief in his assertion. "So now tell away."

"Well, promise not to tell any one," pleaded Lettie.

"O yes, we'll promise," said Dick, carelessly.

"It was on the day we left Philadelphia," began Lettie, desperately; "that rainy Saturday! You remember, Julie! You know we intended to take the three-o'clock train to New York, but the crowd was so great, that the doors were closed when part of the people had passed through to the cars, and the rest were obliged to wait for the next train. It was almost entirely dark when we were finally in the cars. In the crowd, you recollect, I got separated from you and the rest of our party, Julie, and was pushed along to the other end of the car, where I got a seat. I sat for some minutes amused in listening to the various remarks and complaints made by my neighbors. One man was scolding about the cars, which he declared, if the seats were taken out, would not be fit for a cattle car."

"You seemed very glad to get into it, however," retorted the gentleman opposite, upon which all who had seen his frantic rush for a seat, laughed.

"Just in front of me was a lady dressed in deep mourning. I had noticed her as I was pushed along, and had intended if possible to obtain the vacant seat by her side, as the other seats were filled with men, but before I got to her, a man took the place, and on my looking about me, another man in a seat directly behind her rose, saying, 'Here's a chance, miss,' and before I understood that he was speaking to me, he had pushed me into his place, and vanished into the next car."

"I was tired and wet, and very thankful for an opportunity to put my heavy bag down, and rest myself. The lamps were lighted, but before we had been many minutes on our way, the one at my end of the car went out—and the other burned so dimly that it scarcely made 'darkness visible.' In a short time the man sitting in front of me, by the lady in mourning, went into the next car. I debated whether I would change my seat, but I was comfortably settled, and too tired to want to move. My companion in the seat was an old gentleman already fast asleep, and I concluded to stay where I was."

"I had hardly come to this decision when

the door opened, and a gentleman, entering, advanced to the vacant seat, and courteously inquired of the lady if it were disengaged. It was too dark for me to see more than that he was tall, and graceful in his movements. He wore a heavy cloak, and a travelling cap pulled so low that even had it been light, I could not have seen much of his face.

"Although the lady made but a very brief reply, something in her tone made me think she was weeping. The gentleman politely arranged her bag and shawl-strap in the rack above her, and then quietly seated himself. There was nothing to occupy me, and presently I fell into a doze, from which, however, I was frequently aroused by the laughter of two men who sat two or three seats behind me, and seemed to be determined upon entertaining the whole company with accounts of their various exploits and adventures in Philadelphia."

"You can tell me some of them," suggested Dick.

"No I can't," laughed Lettie, "for the voices were so loud and coarse that I listened as little as possible. Besides, as I told you, I was half asleep, and listening to nothing, when suddenly I was roused—broad awake—by a sound from the seat in front of me. It was a sob—low and smothered, but so full of misery!

"I sprang partially from my seat, only thinking that the lady was in distress, and I must offer help, when the idea occurred to me that she might have just left some dear friends, and would prefer not to have any one notice her grief. So I sank back, determining to listen for a few moments, and try to ascertain what I ought to do.

"But the gentleman by her side seemed to think no delay necessary, for I could just see that he bent toward her, and I heard him apologize for the inquiry, but beg to know if he could be of any service.

"The kind voice appeared to take away what self-control she had, for her sobs came thick and fast, though she evidently tried not to attract notice. Fortunately, as I have said, the gentleman in my seat was fast asleep, and those noisy men behind must have prevented any one else from hearing.

"After a few minutes she managed to thank the gentleman, and added in such a sweet, childish voice, 'I am very sorry to have disturbed you.'

"I had somehow fancied that she was an elderly lady—perhaps the mourning dress had made me, but as soon as I heard her speak, I knew she must be young, not older than I possibly, and I felt so sorry for her! The gentleman seemed to feel so too. I could not hear all he said, for sometimes the cars shook and rattled, and the rain was beating on the roof and against the windows, but I could understand that he was again offering his services, and begging to know how he could assist her."

"Why, Lettie," exclaimed Julie, "don't you know it was very wrong in her to talk to a perfect stranger? You ought not to have listened!"

"How could I help it?" demanded Lettie. "I could not get up and walk the whole length of the car to where you were sitting, laughing with Kate Seymour's brother; and how much better was that, I would like to know? You had never met him till that day!"

"Good for you, Lettie," cried Dick, patting the curly head, approvingly. "Now don't make any more comments till the story is done, Julie, or the supper-bell will ring, and spoil it all."

"Beside," continued Lettie, "I don't believe that man was wicked. He spoke so gently and kindly. Just as Uncle May used to talk to me when I was sick last year."

"Well, I never!" ejaculated the horrified Julie.

"Presently," said Lettie, "she told him what she had been crying about. It seems she was an orphan. She had lived in Baltimore, but her father and mother had both died within a few weeks, and then it was found that there was no property left, nothing for her to live on, though she had always supposed her father to be wealthy. She had no relatives, but some friend or acquaintance had recommended her as a nursery governess to a lady in New York, and she was now on her way to take the situation.

"'I have tried to be brave,' she said, and I could fancy, Dick, just what a pitiful look there must be on her face, 'but sitting here alone in the dark, the remembrance of my dear parents and our happy home came over me, and I could not help crying.'"

"Poor little girl!" muttered Dick, who had a soft heart under his domineering ways. "Why couldn't you have spoken to her, Lettie, and brought her home with you?"

You know mother is always ready to befriend any one in trouble."

"Dick, Dick!" cried Julie, in consternation. "Are you a perfect idiot?"

"No, thank you, ma'am," returned the unabashed youth. "I leave that honor for some of my female relatives."

"Hush, Dick!" pleaded Lettie. "To tell the truth, I did think of it, and made up my mind that I would speak to her before we got to New York, and at least give her my address, begging her to let me know if she could not succeed at the place where she was going. Just then a man came through the car to sell fruit, and he was followed by another, with Centennial views. Then those two noisy men grew even more noisy than usual over some joke or story, so it was quite a long while before I heard anything more. I could just hear that the gentleman was talking very low, and very earnestly, and the girl seemed much interested, and much astonished, too, I thought. Perhaps I oughtn't to have tried to hear at all, but I did, for I wanted so much to know more about the poor little thing."

"At last, however, just before we got to Trenton, I heard the gentleman say, 'There is one way in which we can settle it, and I entreat you to think favorably of it. As soon as we reach New York, I will take you to a clergyman, and we will be married. Then I shall have a right to protect you, that no one can dispute or censure. For the sake of'—Then the locomotive shrieked, and I heard no more."

"Phew!" whistled Dick. "This is thrilling!"

"I don't believe a word of it, Lettie," exclaimed Julie. "You must have been asleep and dreamed it!"

"I was not asleep!" rejoined Lettie. "I never felt so wide awake in my life. I heard nothing more of any account. The girl seemed to hesitate, and the gentleman to urge her, and when we got to Jersey City, they crossed the ferry together, and I saw him call a carriage at New York."

"And you never told me a word about it!" began Julie, reproachfully.

"How could I, Julie, when you were laughing and talking with Kate and her brother all the time?"

"I wish I knew what became of the girl?" observed Dick, thoughtfully.

"So do I," answered Lettie. "I have often wished to know the end. But I am

quite sure the gentleman was good and kind, Dick."

"Many thanks, my little niece," exclaimed a merry voice behind her, which made Lettie start up, suddenly.

"Uncle May!" she exclaimed, in astonishment, as she recognized the tall, handsome intruder.

"Yes, and Aunt Effie!" he answered, laughingly, leading from the back parlor a slight, girlish figure, looking much too youthful to be called aunt by the group of three about the fire.

That both the new-comers were favorites was evident from the cordial greeting extended to them, and it was not until the whole party were cosily seated about the glowing fire, that Dick inquired "What did you mean, Uncle May, by thanking Lettie, when you came in? She was not talking of you."

"O, I thought she was," replied Uncle May, with a comical look at his wife, which made her blush and smile.

"That was a very interesting story of yours, Lettie," remarked her uncle, presently.

"Why, Uncle May!" exclaimed Lettie. "Did you hear me? Were you in the parlor all the time?" and the girl looked really distressed.

"Don't be troubled little one," said her uncle, kindly. "Yes, Effie and I came into the back parlor just as you commenced, and I was so much interested, that I would not allow her to interrupt! So we listened. Played eavesdroppers! In fact, 'did as we had been done by,' as you will understand when I tell you the end of your story, that you wished so much to hear."

"O, May!" exclaimed his young wife, appealingly.

But he smilingly shook his head. "Yes, I shall, Effie, to reward this little girl for her interest in the friendless orphan."

"After you saw the interesting pair enter a carriage at the ferry, Lettie," he continued, "they were driven directly to the house of a well-known clergyman, and united in the holy bonds of matrimony."

"But how do you know?" asked Lettie, breathlessly.

"Because the lady was no less a personage than your Aunt Effie, and the gentleman, your devoted Uncle May. Was I not right to thank her, Dick?" he inquired, mischievously.

"But I thought—that is, I didn't know," stammered poor Lettie, in much embarrassment, while Julie and Dick seemed petrified with astonishment.

"I know you didn't know!" laughed Uncle May. "The fact is, we didn't mean any one should know, but it was too good a story to be spoiled, for want of an end. Now don't look so grieved, Lettie, but come to your old place on my knee, while I tell you the beginning, for as Dick remarked, you only had the middle, and not quite the whole of that. O, Aunt Effie won't be jealous. There is room enough for both. There, now, we are comfortable."

"You will remember that early in September, I went to Washington on business. I was detained there longer than I expected, but on the evening of Saturday the 23d inst., I left Philadelphia, on the six-o'clock train, for New York."

"The very one that we were on!" exclaimed Julie.

Lettie said nothing, but she evidently began to understand matters.

"I had no idea that you were there," continued Uncle May, "but, as I see Lettie already understands, it was I who was in front of her, and who, when the sobs of the lady beside me attracted my attention, tried to comfort her. The part of the story that Lettie missed was this. When Effie told me her name, I found, to my surprise, that she was the daughter of an old friend of mine, whom I had not seen for years. The news of his death had been sent to me before his wife's illness, which followed almost immediately, but as I had been travelling all summer, my letters had not reached me regularly, and I had never received the intelligence."

"This was what made Effie so willing to trust a stranger. I am sure even Julie will excuse her now. I had never seen Effie before, indeed I could scarcely be said to see her then, as she did not raise her veil, and the car was so dark, but I had known of her all her life, and do not fear that I shall ever repent having yielded to Love in the Dark."

LOVE'S HOLOCAUST.

BY CATHERINE EARNSHAW.

CHAPTER I.

If ever dreams seem worth the dreaming, and life seems worth the living, it is in the blue summer-time of New England. The delight of breathing airs that surely come from some paradise of the blest is worth the tolling through icy winters. The new-mown hay of fields whose green lies before me, the soft perfume of flowers, the heavenly whiteness of the fleecy clouds that float above, all give that sweetest of all feelings — the delicious enervation of dream-life.

Amber wine goes lazily along our veins: it does not fire us, but it gives the languid life we think the poppy of the East gives to its votaries. Great, beautiful things we'll do some day, and on us some dear blue eyes will smile, some soft, fair hair will droop over ours, and we shall feel the fragrant breath from scarlet lips. Life shall move slowly by us; but with that sweet breath mingling with ours, the honey of those lips so near our mouth, who can harm us? Who has not lived through summer hours thus crowded with visions, and found too soon their Junes merging into Decembers?

Will the girl who sits in the doorway, gathering the twilight to her bosom, and fondling its beauty there, — will the dusk in her eyes ever deepen into night, as this gloaming will do? She may be asking the same question, for her face grows dark with the wishing and fearing the future. Looking at her form thus, her pale face hidden by the vines against which she is leaning it, one would think her beautiful, so perfectly symmetrical is her waist, her arms and hands, so graceful is the curve and bend of her throat, so perfect is her pale brown hair, sheeny in sunlight, brown in shade, and always soft and luxuriant. But the face she lifts from the dewy leaves is white, low-browed, and irregularly featured. Her eyes are not "expressive eyes," — at least they have never yet been so, — but what they lack the voice one hears when she opens that ill-cut mouth fully supplies; for her tones are sweet and harmonious as the melody of flutes in tropic nights.

"Tomorrow will be even as this day, I suppose," said a voice, whose owner came

along the passage-way to the door as she spoke. "Perfect quiet; not even a call from the old minister."

Faith turned, and, moving for the newcomer to sit beside her on the broad stone step, she said, —

"Yes, very quiet we are. I like it. Are you not happy in this warmth and air, my sister?"

"Happy! yes, if utter dullness can be called so. I am not unhappy, at any rate. I could not muster sufficient impetus to be downright miserable. This weather is so bewitching one can only be about so-so" —

"Which is almost a state of beatitude for me," interrupted Faith. "Come closer, Grace, and I will infuse into your heart some of the indolent pleasure which this air gives me."

Faith drew the dusky face of Grace to her own, and leaned again upon the viney lattice. Notwithstanding its vanity, its haughty cast, the face resting against Faith's was fascinating, with its large eyes and curving mouth, and in its superb epicureanism.

"Aunt Revely seems in a state of halcyon enjoyment, now that she is morally certain that we shall stay here hum-drumming it all summer; and she can oversee, in undisturbed quiet, the distribution of corn to the Shanghaes, and bread-crumbs to the sick chickens. This is a cosy old place though, isn't it, Faith?"

Grace looked up at the great stone pillars of the piazza, and round on the well-cared-for grounds that surrounded the house, and then nestled her face against Faith's cheek, repeating, "Isn't it, Faith?"

"I think so; and Aunt Revely is a cosy old aunt to take us two girls to disturb her loved quiet. What should we have done if she had n't taken us, Grace?"

"Our love would have held us together, would it not?" Grace asked, raising her face so that her brilliant eyes met the calm ones of Faith.

"If my mother's affection were half as strong as that of my step-sister, I should not now be burdening Aunt Revely," Faith said. "However," she resumed, cheerfully, "I should not be half as happy with my fashionable mamma as I am here in this

grand old homestead, with my queer aunt, and with you, best of sisters."

"Where do you suppose your mother is now?" Grace asked, with an appearance of interest.

"Probably at Saratoga, or Newport, or some place equally as congenial," Faith answered. "I've not had a letter these six months, and when I do they are only bulletins of fashionable news, — not very interesting to you and me."

"I believe I rather like them," Grace returned, in a hesitating, bashful way, that made Faith laughingly inquire, —

"And what does my doubtful, unsophisticated sister like in such a collection? Remember I have had a year's tournament among the *elite*, so I speak advisedly, even if ironically."

"Oh, well," Grace began, enthusiastically, "there seems to be such a fairy-land of glitter, — such bewitching labyrinths of lights and beautiful women and flowers and perfume and" —

"And whiskers and white vests and red wine!" cried Faith, in a tone of such exalted delight as made Grace blush for her own enthusiasm. Then smoothing Grace's hair softly, she continued, "You will pardon my amusement, but I feel so much older than you. You know I am twenty-four, and you are a child, for all your eighteen years."

"Yes," said Grace, speaking very softly, "I've often thought that it did not seem possible that you, Faith, ever felt so young, so inexperienced, and so ignorant, as I do now. I imagine I see you at thirteen or fourteen, more dignified, more attractive, with more of a grand air about you than I shall ever possess. I know I am stately enough, but I seem to lack that perfect poise of character which is a characteristic of you, and which gives every motion a power that is very peculiar, and which few can resist. I've not expressed it half as forcibly as I wished, but — There! I see by your face that you are laughing at me. I assure you I am in earnest. Where do you get your strength, Faith?"

The girl raised her beautiful face from Faith's shoulder, and looked questioningly at her sister. Faith looked grave; some grief of the past seemed shadowing her. At last she answered, —

"I inherited decision and endurance from my father." She smiled through the shad-

ow, and continued in a light tone, "The remainder of my endearing qualities must have been cultivated for the purpose of ensnaring guileless little creatures like you, Grace."

"And great intellectual men like Mr. Surrington!" cried Grace, with an almost imperceptible change of voice, and flutter of the eyelids.

"Mr. Surrington! I hope nothing has ensnared him."

If Faith blushed as she spoke, the gloom veiled her face; but the tender music of her voice as she said the name would have been more gratifying to that gentleman than varying color.

"Nothing save yourself, I suppose," said Grace.

"I am sure I don't want to ensnare him," returned Faith.

"But you want something to hold him to you, don't you?" persisted Grace.

"Faith's face put on an inscrutable look: she exclaimed, gayly, —

"Why, Grace Carley! you are absolutely getting sentimental. I am afraid I shall be so infected if I stay out in this beautiful night longer. Good-by."

The good-by was echoed by Grace, who wrapped a shawl about her, leaned against a pillar, and, in contemplating the beauties of the night, fell asleep; in which situation Aunt Revely found her, and, after compelling her to keep awake to hear an impromptu lecture on dampness and night airs, sent her unceremoniously to bed.

CHAPTER II.

When Faith first came to Mrs. Revely's she had been forcibly struck by her aunt's peculiarities, and the feeling of comical wonder rather increased than diminished as she became more thoroughly acquainted with the woman who had offered herself and Grace a home, when the volatile mother had not known in what way to dispose of them.

On the calm, tragico-comical face of Miss Revely the two girls had looked in vain for any half-hidden romance of youthful days; so Grace had concluded that in all her fifty years of life Aunt Revely's heart had been untouched.

"Which accounts for her being in a continual fit of vexation," Grace had said, resignedly, at the close of their consultation concerning their aunt.

Though always systematically endeavoring to keep in the good graces of Miss Revely, more from a sense of gratitude than from policy, the two girls failed most woefully.

"Well, Faith, Grace had a nice little nap on the back-stone step last night. Where did you sleep? in the orchard?"

"I did have a delightful doze there, aunt. It was so queer to sleep with the leaves about my face."

"Delightful time, indeed! When I found you you sat with your neck so far awry that I feared you had invented a new method of suicide, and had tried the first experiment."

Miss Revely listened complacently to Grace's horrified "How can you talk so!" Then the old lady turned to Faith, and asked, in the same tone that she had just inquired if she would have coffee, —

"Are you going to marry Mr. Surrington?"

Faith looked up with a cold, composed face, but did not reply immediately. Her aunt continued, —

"You don't expect your mother would approve of the match, do you?"

"I don't know, I am sure," replied Faith, a little haughtily.

"Yes, you do know," said Miss Revely, with emphasis. "You know that he is not half fashionable enough to meet your mother's approval."

Faith had risen from the breakfast-table, and stood looking out at the wooded hills that rose at the north of the house. She was thinking intensely and painfully of that mother who had never been a mother to her.

"Ah!" suddenly cried Grace, her cheek suffusing slightly as she spoke. "You know the old phrase, — 'Speak of angels,' &c.: so, in truth, here comes my Lord Surrington now. An early morning call, I should think."

Faith felt her pulses quickening, but she did not move from the deep window recess where she stood.

Mr. Surrington greeted Miss Revely and Grace, then excused himself for calling so early, saying that he came over in the first train to enjoy a horseback ride before the sun was so oppressively warm.

"Was Miss Cyril at home, and well?" he concluded. He looked round the room, and Faith knew from the change of his voice

that he saw her. He came up directly. He held the hand she extended with lingering pressure, and forgot for a moment for what he came. He could so easily forget everything while listening to Faith's voice. Releasing her hand, he said, —

"We must enjoy this morning together: will you ride with me?"

"I cannot resist a horseback ride under any circumstances:" then, after a moment's pause, and with a full smile at him, "certainly not with you."

She left the room to prepare for the ride, while Surrington, with her smile in his heart, went to Grace, and talked absently with her till Faith should appear. That she was expeditious was evident from the fact that in a few minutes she opened the door of the breakfast-parlor, dressed in riding-habit and gauntlets. She said, —

"My escort cannot complain of any dilatoriness that has delayed our excursion."

"I can complain of nothing," Surrington said, advancing a step toward her, and then pausing.

Faith leaned against the door, and looked laughing in his face. The something of grace and power in every motion of Faith's gave Surrington an irresistible desire to kneel at her feet, and offer her, as in the old days of chivalry, a lifetime of devotion. An exclamation from her recalled him, and told him that he was an unconscionably long while putting on his gloves.

"I thought only ladies wore tight gloves," she said. "Shall I help you? You must come to me, for the length of my dress prevents me from taking more steps than is necessary."

"The enchantress of the place has deprived me of the poor faculties I usually possess," Mr. Surrington said, extending his half-gloved hand to Faith, whose fingers soon drew the kid on, and who said, as she turned from the door, —

"Enchantresses are not generally as useful as that."

"But mine combines grace with utility."

"How very unlover-like to speak of utility!" Faith exclaimed, looking back at him after she was fairly seated on her horse.

"But I am not a lover made to order, like — like Mr. Huville, for instance," Mr. Surrington replied, riding close to his companion, and allowing his eyes to meet hers. She could not, if she had tried, repress a

look of surprise, perhaps a little confusion, when he mentioned the name of Huville.

"Is Mr. Huville a friend of yours?" she asked.

"No; an acquaintance merely. He came to my office upon some law business of my father's. I thought him an elegant personification of a ladies' man. Do you know him?" he asked.

"Yes; I fancy I know him pretty thoroughly," she answered.

Surrington's astonishment was not unmingled with suspicion. He asked, earnestly and rapidly, —

"When did you see him? Do you like him?"

"I think him very handsome."

"Ah!"

"And very traveled."

"Oh!"

"And very *distingue*; and possessing great discrimination, for he asked me to marry him."

"Indeed! Shall we ride faster, Miss Cyril?"

"Certainly; I like to ride fast."

They galloped on over a road that wound through thick piney woods, and the perfume seemed to give an elasticity to their horses, for they sprang over the leaf-strewn path with increasing rapidity. At length Faith's horse shot past that of her companion, and rushed on gloriously free and grand till he reached the foot of a hill, when Faith reined him in, and, letting him walk slowly, she took off her hat, and allowed the morning breeze to fan a face no longer white. The perfectness of her position in the saddle, the elegance of her form, the symmetry and whiteness of the hand which was now ungloved, and rested upon the black mane of her horse, made her an appropriate figure for June sunshine to play upon as it came, "silver-sifted," through the branches of the few trees that grew upon the hill. As Surrington came up, she turned to him, and said, —

"But I refused him."

It was no wonder that Surrington bent toward her, and said, in a hushed voice, —

"My own true-hearted Faith! How am I blessed in knowing that you have said you loved me!"

"And I am happy, Hector," Faith said, still stroking with unconscious tenderness her horse's neck. There was that in the sweet power of her voice that told of a love

deep, pure, unalterable as the blue sky above her.

The facile countenance of Surrington expressed a joy he did not attempt to utter. The horses walked slowly through that beautiful hour, which neither Faith nor Surrington ever forgot. After a while Surrington asked, —

"Will you tell me of your acquaintance with Huville? You must imagine my curiosity: I cannot think how you happened to know him."

"I saw him when with my mother at Newport one summer. My mother favored his addresses very strongly, as he is of a wealthy Boston family. I cannot say but that his flippant sarcasm on men and things sometimes amused me, but his lack of depth and originality was so evident that I could not love him. I saw him a great deal that summer, and he was so good as to offer me his hand; but, notwithstanding the importunate urging of my mother, I could not bring myself to accept him. My mother had set her heart on the match, and she was so very angry that she declared she would have nothing more to do with me, and bundled me off to Aunt Revely's. There is the history of my acquaintance with Carlton Huville."

"Unfortunate man! I can never be sufficiently thankful that I don't know how to sympathize with him," cried Surrington, whose transient jealousy the words and manner of Faith had dispelled, and given him a sense of exulting delight.

"It is something beside the ride that has given your face that peculiar glow," Grace said when Faith entered the parlor, having left Surrington at the gate. "I thought betrothed lovers were as matter of fact as husband and wife. I don't see what should occasion excitement or heightened color now."

"A rapid canter will have that effect generally," Faith replied; "so waste no insinuations upon me."

CHAPTER III.

June had passed into July, and the sultry air was hardly more refreshing than the heated winds from desert sands. Faith sat in the back garden. With indolent, dreaming eyes she watched the softly waving leaves of the flower-garden. She saw the peonies bend their heads, and the sweet pinks nod at each other across the walk;

the Persian lilacs swayed, and showed the whitish green of the under side of their leaves. She heard the quiet chirping of the canary under the piazza, and the subdued cooing of the pigeons that were walking about on the grass-plot at her feet. She saw the white, warm-looking clouds in the blue that showed between the moving leaves. She saw and heard these things without knowing it; for the faint, sweet smell that formed a part of the air itself was around her, and imbuing her soul with a languor too delicious to be broken by the efforts to define the outlines of objects. The air she breathed seemed sufficient then to make existence beautiful, for her life was in that season when the beautiful is placed before the simply useful, sometimes before the good.

She had passed the gleeful rhyme of her childhood, and had entered upon the grand poem of her womanhood, and she did not yet care to read the solemn psalm of middle age.

A voice came from the porch, — "Miss Cyril!" She did not heed, and it said again, "Miss Cyril, Mr. Surrington is here to see you."

Faith rose in answer to the servant's voice. She was a little loth to leave her rare Acadian wood even for Surrington. He was in the parlor, and, as Faith came in by the way of the conservatory, she reached unobserved the glass door which opened into the parlor. With her hand upon the latch, she glanced through before moving it. Grace was standing near Surrington; she held a book in one hand which it seemed she had just been reading; her other hand was on Surrington's arm, and her face looked up at his, all its dark beauty glowing with a flash of passionate love. From the partial view Faith had of Surrington's face, she thought it wore a startled, surprised look. She glided quickly from the conservatory, and, walking across the hall, entered the parlor from that door. Surrington was leaning against the chimney-piece, and Grace sat in an easy-chair before him. Faith saw a faint blush rise and subside upon the face of Grace as she entered. A slightly astonished look still lingered upon the gentleman's countenance. There seemed to be that in the very atmosphere that made Faith's heart beat strangely and with alarm.

"Am I come like some wicked elf to break up a delightful *tete a tete*?" she

asked, laughing, and walking to a position from whence she could see the eyes of Grace; for she well knew those tell-tale eyes had never yet concealed anything from her. Grace did not look directly at her, but across, and in every other direction. Faith saw that her eyes were troubled and dim, and that they looked a thousand times more beautiful than ever. Surrington said, —

"It is impossible for you to interrupt; besides, I asked for you!"

"And I dutifully obeyed, and presented myself. Pray sit down: it's too great an exertion to stand unnecessarily in July." And Faith subsided on to the sofa by the window. Grace could not see in the calm, nonchalant face of her sister how many emotions were striving in her soul.

Surrington came and sat down at the feet of Faith, and, folding his hands over hers, he said, apologetically, —

"I've been here so often lately that I hardly think I should have come today if I had not found a letter in the office for you, and so gave myself the pleasure of bringing it over."

He drew the missive from his pocket, and watched her as she read; but if he had wished to discover by her face of what nature it was, he was disappointed. Though she flushed somewhat, he could not tell whether it was from pleasure or surprise.

"Shall I ask your advice, Hector?" she said, at last, looking down at him.

"You know that I am interested, for I see you are," he said.

"I warn you I shall do as I please," she replied; "so guess, and advise accordingly. This letter is from my mother. She says she has run through the property Mr. Carley left her: she is ill and discouraged, and wants me to come to her in D—, where she has retired to escape the compassion of her fashionable acquaintances. What am I to do?"

Surrington's face grew grave.

"I know what you will do," he said: "you will go. You will surrender every enjoyment you have found in this place, and give yourself to a life of monotony, perhaps of labor."

"And will it not be right?" she asked.

The eyes of Surrington gleamed excitedly. He pressed his lips to the hand he held.

"O Faith Cyril!" he cried, "notwithstanding your dreams, your beautiful romances, you follow most rigidly in the path

of right. Yes, I suppose that it will be right."

He spoke despondingly, and his eyes appealed strongly from his words.

"You would have me do it?" questioned Faith.

"If I speak from my heart," he said, earnestly, "no. Is it really necessary? It is highly probable that she still possesses an income sufficient for a comfortable support; but because she suddenly finds herself unable to maintain her usual fashionable style, she calls imperatively upon a daughter she has once discarded and despised. Turn aside, Faith, from that granite road which you call duty: walk with me in the path of another duty,—the path which I shall smooth for my wife. Give me the immediate possession of this hand, and our home shall be your mother's also. You must trust in me," sinking his voice still lower. "Oh, love me, even as I do you! How can I tell you of the devotion of my heart? how my love shall constantly encircle you? and how, if you yield to me, my life will be superbly crowned? Do you know, Faith, that the idea of your going away brings to me some trouble, more than the fact of your absence can do?"

Faith's eyes grew dim with tears that she would not let fall. She looked down at the earnest, eloquent face before her, and again she felt the shadow of some coming evil. Summoning her voice, she said,—

"It ought not, for I shall be Faith Cyril there the same as here. It must be a latent fickleness in yourself that gives you the fear of change."

"You wrong me by the suspicion of such a thing. In all my visions of the future, your face, your voice, *yourself*, give me all the happiness that I expect or wish. I know that pecuniarily I am not yet in the position I should wish your husband to occupy, but you know my business is every month increasing. I hope confidently for a successful future in my profession. So, Faith, will you not now become my wife? and the home I secure for you shall be your mother's also."

Faith saw the eager look that accompanied his words, and felt the power with which he said them. Had her mother been a different woman, how gladly would she have yielded to Surrington.

"You do not know my mother," she said. "I cannot consent to anything that

will fetter and seriously annoy you all your life. Our marriage must still be postponed. I must bid farewell to Aunt Revely and Grace, and start for D— tomorrow if I can."

Unable to bear the eyes of her lover, Faith bent her head to her hand. Her voice had trembled in its music, and she seemed to supplicate the tenderness of Surrington. He kept silent for a moment, then he said,—

"I will entreat you no more for my sake. Do you not think how lonely Grace will be?" he asked, looking toward the chair she had occupied.

"She will miss me because she loves me. I count upon you to supply my place while I am away. Ride over sometimes and see her, will you?"

Faith raised her head as she asked this question.

"If you wish it," he said, indifferently. "Pardon me, but can nothing persuade?"

She placed her fingers over his lips, and, while he held them there, she said,—

"You are too dear to be heard unmoved; so do not speak of it."

Her caresses were so rare that when they were given they had the power of making him forget everything but her presence. When he left her at the door, he said,—

"I will come for you tomorrow, for I shall escort you to D—, and try to win your mother to my cause."

As Faith had expected, Grace was passionate in her grief and remonstrances. Since Mr. Carley's marriage with Faith's mother Faith had been to the lonesome child a loving sister, with almost a mother's tenderness. For Faith the impulsive, Southern Grace had felt a love violent, jealous, and exacting; and now, the night before Faith's departure, she lay with her head upon her sister's pillow, her soft arms around her neck, and her lips against her cheek, murmuring entreaties not to be left alone, with a despairing earnestness, which, well as she knew her temperament, gave Faith a chilling, foreboding sensation. In vain did she assure Grace that she should return, that her love was unalterable; but Grace only sobbed, and clung closer to her sister, whispering,—

"I cannot be good without you! Oh, stay!"

At last Faith ceased to remonstrate, and lay quietly smoothing the black hair of the

head so near her own. Suddenly Grace raised her face, and cried, vehemently, —

"Be it upon your own head, then. I cannot trust myself to do right without you," and relapsed into silence, and finally fell asleep.

The journey was quite a long one, occupying nearly three days, and the reception they met with at the end was not calculated to cheer them. In the hotel of the village of D—— they found Mrs. Carley. She was reclining in an easy-chair, and said, as they entered, —

"Ah Faith, so you have come?" Then raised her eye-glass, and attentively surveyed Surrington, being evidently very much disgusted by the sight of him, for she waved her perfumed handkerchief slowly before her face, and, turning, said to Faith, —

"So your aunt's footman escorted you here. I am glad you had him take off his liveries before commencing the journey, because in livery he would have attracted so much disagreeable attention. You may dismiss him now, as there is no further need of him."

The regard he had for Faith alone restrained Surrington from displaying his mirthful vexation. Faith's quiet dignity did not desert her, though, and she said, gravely, —

"This is my mother, Mr. Surrington; and, mother, this is a gentleman, a lawyer, residing near my aunt's, and I intend to marry him."

Faith could not help smiling as she concluded. Her mother either did not hear, or ignored the last part of the sentence.

"Briefless, I suppose," she murmured, behind her glasses.

"I am happy to say no, madam," returned Surrington.

"Please be seated," Mrs. Carley was so good as to say after this assurance. He, however, did not sit down, but said, as he stepped to the door, —

"Will you grant me an interview this evening, Mrs. Carley?"

Mrs. Carley looked hastily at Faith, in a manner which showed she really had not heard what she had said concerning her relation to Surrington. Then she replied, —

"Yes, you may come at eight." And Surrington bowed himself out.

He came punctually at the time appointed, and found Mrs. Carley in all the glory

of afternoon toilet, looking ridiculously out of place in that country hotel.

After much airy and nonsensical persiflage, Surrington at length found an opportunity of asking of Mrs. Carley her daughter's hand. Mrs. Carley appeared just as indifferent as it is well-bred to seem when one is very much interested, and placidly inquired, —

"Should you prefer that your future family should visit Saratoga, Cape May, or Sharon Springs during the heated term? And what annuity would you settle upon your mother-in-law?"

Poor Surrington! He had proposed to himself that, disagreeable as it would be, he would support the mother of Faith in very respectable circumstances. He briefly stated the case. Mrs. Carley gently fanned herself.

"Impossible! utterly impossible! as I said to Lord Rawdon when he asked me to walk with him three consecutive times," she replied.

Surrington's look of raging impatience would have awakened any other woman to a sense of his earnestness. She blandly contemplated him for a moment, and then said, —

"I hope you will believe that I am extremely sorry for this very disagreeable scene, — but — really, it is absurd; your pecuniary situation, you know."

"May I ask," said Surrington, rising from his seat, and speaking in a smothered tone, "may I ask if you are extremely wealthy yourself, and for that reason place an insuperable barrier between Faith and myself? I had thought," he continued, growing more impolite every moment, "that you were so unfortunate as to have exhausted your fortune: in that case I see no reason why you should object to my suit."

"You forget," observed Mrs. Carley, "that, if I am not wealthy at this present moment, I am of a wealthy and aristocratic family." She closed the audience with a motion of the hand.

In the brief half hour in which Surrington saw Faith before his departure he could see in her pale lips and unquiet eyes something of that pain which he knew she must feel, and which was seething and trembling in his own heart. Still she infused into his heart a little of the hope and endurance which she tried to feel herself, and he went

away, his soul filled with the sweetness of her words and caresses.

By a wary investigation Faith learned that her mother had now about two hundred dollars, all that was left of what, with the slightest judiciousness of management, would have been for her an independent fortune. Mrs. Carley had never inquired into the state of her finances, and had lavished money most freely, till one day her banker informed her that she had left but a pittance of two hundred dollars, and that that would be gone in a week's continuing of her present style of living. So she had packed up, and come off in shame and despair to the country town, where she had instantly sent for Faith, with a pettish anger in her heart that her daughter had not married Mr. Huville, and thus secured for both a home of affluence.

Notwithstanding her knowledge of her mother's character, Faith could not help being astonished at the manner in which she was living. She had preferred lodgings at the village hotel to rooms in a private house, and was going through the routine of morning-dress, dinner and afternoon toilet with the greatest punctilio.

"She could not so easily throw aside the habits of a lifetime," she said, when Faith found her elaborately rouging her pale cheeks.

"But do you not know that your income cannot sustain this?" urged Faith.

"How can you say such a thing?" cried Mrs. Carley. "Here I am denying myself the pleasure of a watering-place, going to no operas, — making myself perfectly miserable. What more would you have?"

"But we must live within our means; and, what is more, I must do something to increase those means. To begin, I shall engage rooms elsewhere this very day."

Faith spoke very quietly, but her mother stood aghast, and snatched a fan from her dressing-table, by whose aid she intended to get through with the coming scene. While her mother fanned, unable to speak, Faith went on:—

"I think it better for us to keep house by ourselves; and this afternoon I shall go through the village in search of suitable rooms. Then, as soon as possible, I shall seek a situation as teacher in some kind of a school, and shall enter upon my duties as soon as I am so fortunate as to find a place."

Mrs. Carley's viniagrette was in vigorous operation; in fact that lady was in the midst of a great burst of tears. Faith leaned back in her chair, and tried to wait calmly for the subsiding of the storm.

"Get a school! Enter upon your duties as soon as possible! Be a school-ma'am!" came in little volcanic bursts from the astonished woman. Anger growing very quickly out of her surprise, she said, "You shall not do it! I shall exercise my authority. Faith Cyril, you shall not get such a situation. That is decided. Fasten this earring for me if you please."

Faith fastened the ornament, and afterward said, with her hand on the door,—

"Mamma, you will think better of my proposition, and forgive me for carrying it into immediate execution."

Mrs. Carley went to the parlor, and from the window saw Faith go along the street, shawled and bonneted for a walk.

CHAPTER IV.

Fortune favors the alert and willing, and Faith was so fortunate as to find a vacant place in the village academy, and to secure the position at once. She also found rooms, and speedily inducted herself and mother into them. Mrs. Carley might as well have tried to resist fate as to resist the quiet force with which Faith went about her duty.

Thus cosily settled in half of a comfortable farmhouse, whose front windows looked upon the academy, and whose porch door opened upon a little path that wound off over a picturesque hill half a mile distant, Faith commenced a life entirely new and strange, and which, unconsciously, she came to like very much. Grace sent her words of dear, sisterly affection, and her heart gathered to itself the sweet, powerful love which permeated Surrington's letters.

The path which led over the hill that rose back of Mrs. Green's was one often walked by Faith in the cool hours of sunset of the long summer days, and there she was generally sure of rambling without intrusion.

But her solitude was interrupted one night in September; for, just as she reached the brow of the hill, she perceived a gentleman ascending from the opposite side. Making a slight, quick movement backward, Faith was about to return, when the well-modulated tones of the man arrested her.

"I beg your pardon, but is yonder the house of Mrs. Green?"

Faith looked up at him as she replied. He was not tall, but well built, and seemed taller than he was. He was perhaps nearly forty, with handsome curly light-brown hair and beard. His eyes were large and blue, but they did not have that look of innocence which some blue eyes have to a greater degree than those of any other color. He thanked Faith for her information, and walked directly down the hill and into the house, as Faith saw, who watched him curiously, with a mixture of interest and wonder.

When she reached home she found the parlor lighted, her mother in full dress, and seemingly carrying on a very successful flirtation with the stranger. Mrs. Green rose when Faith entered, and said, —

"This is my brother, Mr. Falkland, Miss Cyril." And Faith's mother cried, in delighted accents, —

"Only think, my dear, I met this gentleman at the White Hills a few years ago, though I shouldn't have recognized him had he not known me immediately, which is rather strange, I think."

Falkland had bowed silently to Faith, and now said, with an appearance of animation, —

"Mrs. Carley forgets there are some people one always remembers."

Faith persistently stared from the window, and she felt her face burn with indignation and shame at the manner in which her mother received the compliments of Mr. Falkland. Soon the gentleman rose and came to the window. Bending gracefully over her chair, he said, —

"I did not think when I saw you on the hill that I should find you an inmate of my sister's home. Although this may not be the most appropriate place for you, I cannot but congratulate myself that you are here."

Faith listened in silence, and, when he had ceased speaking, though an appropriate answer rose to her lips, she did not express it, for a cold feeling came over her, and a dislike to lessen, by word or sign, the distance between them. She looked at him with frigid eyes, and soon after left the room.

Meanwhile the weeks went by, and Faith saw with dismay and apprehension that Mr. Falkland had gained a complete ascendancy over her mother's mind, — that he knew all

the past history of Mrs. Carley, and that of her husband and daughter. The impenetrable reserve in which Faith had enveloped herself had, in part, prevented any approach he might have wished to make; but, protected and patronized by the mother, he became more attentive to the daughter; and, as the days of Indian summer and the first days of winter wore away, she saw, with a sort of nervous despair, that she could not go out to walk unless he came accidentally upon her, and offered his arm; that he occasionally laid his hand upon hers in the earnestness of conversation, and suffered his eyes to meet hers with all the warmth of an admiration that made her tremble.

"If Miss Cyril is going to the store, allow me to carry that package, as I am going there also," sounded the voice of Mr. Falkland to her ears, one afternoon in early spring, as she had just started on a millinery errand for her mother.

"Thank you: I am quite able to carry it, and will not trouble you," she said, toiling on to get out of the reach of his voice.

"I should never forgive myself did I allow you to walk unassisted in this state of the roads."

With two or three bounds he was beside her, his strong arm guiding her, and his soft tones — Faith could not but own they were soft — murmuring on the air. The store was at some distance, and it was already nearly dark, so that she had the prospect of a long *tete a tete* with him. She had good cause to remember well that night.

Gallant, amusing, and not presuming at all upon the loneliness of his companion, Mr. Falkland was almost agreeable; and when at last, in the gathering darkness, they came to the store, Faith half thought that she had hitherto done him injustice. He opened the door that led to the little salesroom, and stood aside to let her pass. She glanced up to his face as she stepped in, and in the glare of the lights she saw a countenance which was lit by a resolve against which nothing could prevail. Dropping her eyes from that smiling face, as she would have withdrawn her hand from the fire, she stepped quickly up to the counter and ordered her purchases. The postoffice of the village was in a portion of the building, and thither she went, accompanied by Mr. Falkland. Being intensely cold from her long walk, she sat down by the stove,

while her companion looked for letters. She did not repress an exclamation of delight when Mr. Falkland came toward her with two letters.

"You are glad," he said. "Ah, I see by your face that your correspondents are dear. Happy mortals."

He gave her the letters and leaned against the wall, looking directly at her over the newspaper he held up to screen his face from the heat. Faith's epistles were from Surrington and Grace, and, preferring to read Grace's letter with those eyes upon her face, she rapidly opened the closely written sheet. So vividly and sweetly did she feel the warm lips of Grace touching her own, and her dear hand wandering softly over her hair, as she read the words "Dearest of sisters and friends," that she shaded her eyes with her hand, and gave herself for a moment to the thought of her presence, looking dreamily the while at the first word Grace had penned. Then, with an intuition that something important was coming, she folded the letter and said, as she saw Mr. Falkland's laughing and inquiring eyes on her, —

"I like to enjoy my letters in utter solitude."

Falkland raised his hat and said, —

"Shall I retreat instantly?"

"Oh, no; I shall not read them until I get home. I am warm now; shall we go?"

"Certainly; I am ready."

It had grown very dark, for thick clouds were rapidly rising, and the wind blew steadily with now and then a snow-flake on its wings. The forethought of Mr. Falkland had provided an extra shawl for his companion, and he carefully wrapped her in it before starting in the wind and cold.

"I will shield you from this storm, as I would shield you from everything evil in this world," he said, as they came into the road and into the full force of the cold air.

"I am not so frail as you seem to think," Faith said, almost shrinking when he placed his arm round her to hold her shawl in place.

The arm was not withdrawn, and she felt its nervous energy almost carrying her over the rough walking, while his form shielded her from the wintry blasts. It almost seemed as if she felt something of his own vital power of overcoming any difficulty in the way marked out to go. She could not help thinking how much of force

there was in this man's character. She still associated the idea of wickedness with the person whose arm seemed holding her with a grasp that would dare the world to take her away. Faith walked silently, and as rapidly as the wind and roads would allow.

"Miss Cyril," Mr. Falkland began.

Faith looked up, more in answer to his tone than his words.

"I have that in my heart tonight, which will find a fit utterance in this fierce rushing of storm. Miss Cyril, will you listen to me?"

Faith's voice sounded colder than the snowy air, as she replied, —

"I beg your pardon; but I am not a suitable recipient of anything of interest you may have to say."

She felt the burning of his face reflected on her own. She would have given worlds to have been battling alone with the storm, or yielding, exhausted, to its fury.

"I shall speak, for that which I have to say is worthy of being listened to, even by you, Miss Cyril. Are not the expressions of a true devotion in themselves pleaders for a listener in your heart? Let the passion of my soul infuse itself into yours. Oh, do not speak now," he cried, catching the hand she had half raised in deprecation of his words; "do not speak until I tell you of the fearful blank my life has been; of the years I have spent in looking for the woman who could receive my love. I shall tell you of the miserable dissipation into which I have plunged in search of the happiness which comes only when one is loved. Let me tell you, Faith, that in you, of all the women in the world — in you, beautiful in your consistency, pure and sweet and strong in your walk through life — in you I find the incarnation of all I have looked and longed for in woman. At your feet I lay a heart more wicked than you have ever imagined wickedness, more hackneyed than anything of which your fresh soul can dream, but still as strong in passion as woman could wish her lover's heart to be. Oh, you must accept my love; you do not know what a man of my habits in life is tempted to do when foiled in the strongest feeling he has ever known."

He bent his head down to her. She would not have been mortal had she not felt the powerful magnetism of his eyes and voice, the power of his strange, fierce

strength of purpose. She could not doubt his passion for her; simulation never has that piercing vitality which imparts its feelings to another. There flashed through Faith's mind the vista of a future with one whose mind was as powerful as his will. She felt her own energies rising to meet and coalesce with his, whether for good or evil, and for one wild moment the evil in her nature predominated so strongly, that she was almost ready to go forth to future years with the man by her side. Then there rose to her the face dearest to her in the world, the face of Hector Surrington. She raised her agitated eyes to her companion's face and said, —

"I do not love you, Mr. Falkland."

The cloud that fell over his countenance she could see even in the dusk.

"Do not make that your final answer," he said, with a strong thrill of hope in his voice.

"I can never give you a different one," she replied.

His eyes flamed — his voice vibrated with thwarted passion.

"Consider that such an answer gives me a different feeling than it brings to men who love and are rejected, and then do no more about the matter, either for love or revenge."

"The fact that I must refuse you is so simple, that it needs no consideration," Faith said, quickening her speed, which had been involuntarily slackened as they talked.

"You will never inspire a passion more true than mine."

"But you mentioned revenge in connection with it," Faith said, in a doubtful voice.

"Because I am not a milk-sop to sit down and fold my hands, when there is such work to be done. I am a man of the world in the most heartless sense of the term; still, I have a remnant of that which in my boyhood beat so innocently against my mother's heart — that one spark of good feeling the noble woman whom I love might fan to a flame of good action."

Faith could not help saying, in a bitter voice, —

"That is too old a pretence for you to use, Mr. Falkland. The miserable plea was exhausted by the noble fellow who wrote 'Don Juan.' Besides, you know that unless your wife brought love to the task

of nourishing your good impulses, it would be a vain trial."

The cold, exasperating manner in which she said those words, astonished her. But, harassed and perplexed as she had been for weeks, she felt hardly the control that was natural to her. She instantly repented her taunt, and when they reached the door she glanced up at him with an apology on her lips, but the expression of his face hushed her words, and without even a good-night, they parted in the hall.

Faith went up to her room to read her letters. Surrington's epistle was nearly all concerning business, and Faith read on with some impatience. At the close he said, —

"I have just come from your sister, whose Southern beauty is even more glorious than ever. Did you ever mind, Faith, how beautiful she is?"

Faith smiled satirically. "He is making a discovery," she said to herself. She unfolded the message of Grace.

"More than half a year since you have been gone, dear Faith, and I think everything has changed here. Do you think I get used to your absence? O Faith! if you knew how bitterly your absence has affected me, you would come back. There is that in your presence which gives me some principle of right which I do not have without you, and, indeed, I believe you affect some other people in the same manner. You must come back, my sister, for a short time, if no more. Do not think it one of my impulses; if you do not come, I shall come to you. And I shall come as one who comes to the Bible, to receive some of the goodness of your heart."

Faith thought she saw the path in which her future years were to lead her. She felt her soul illumined with the light of that self-renunciation which was henceforth to shine over her life.

CHAPTER V.

Faith refused Mr. Falkland's proffer of his escort on her journey, and set out alone. As neither Grace nor Surrington knew she was coming, she found no conveyance at the depot to take her to Mr. Revel's, so she walked alone over the familiar road, and entered, unannounced, the house endeared to her by so many reminiscences. She opened the parlor door with an eager, exultant look upon her face that was not

disappointed, for Grace sprang up from a lounge in a distant part of the room, and Faith's neck was encircled by the arms she had so longed to feel there, and she heard the voice that had always been one of the dearest in the world.

Faith held Grace from her, and exclaimed,—

"My beautiful sister! I thought you handsome when I went away, you are radiant now. What genie have you summoned to your aid?"

Grace blushed as she answered,—

"It must be joy at seeing you. You know pleasure is such a beautifier."

"I hope I may have the same effect upon everybody," Faith rejoined; "but I must see Aunt Revely; meanwhile, Grace, attend to my trunks, and divest yourself of that amazed, unbelieving look, for I am here in flesh and blood."

Though they could not have given a reason for their silence, yet neither spoke of Surrington, sure proof that they were both thinking of him.

Faith had been at her aunt's three days, and Surrington had not yet paid them a visit, for it was a whim of Faith's not to inform him of her arrival. They sat together in the parlor, and Grace, whose place was in the window recess, was telling some story in an animated manner, when she stammered, flushed, and then went on with her talk in an indifferent undertone. Faith leaned forward, glanced along the approach, and saw Surrington.

She could not restrain her own heart from beating heavily, but she prevented its flushing or paling her cheek, and when she turned to meet him, without noticing Grace, he came quite hurriedly to her, her form had all that exquisite grace which belonged to her when unagitated. Surrington soon found himself listening and answering to Faith's sweet voice as though he were enjoying the soft sounds and fantasies of a dream. Faith saw that his deepest and best love was her own, but his fancy had strayed to her more beautiful sister. She knew the strength and intensity of Grace's love for him, and to this child of her love she had resolved to leave him. Faith spared her sister the humiliation of confessing her love for another's lover.

"Do you know, Grace, I am going to do rather a strange thing? What do you guess it is?"

Faith asked this one night about a week after her arrival.

"Some absurd thing or other; let yourself as kitchen-maid or engage to do the entire washing for some wealthy family. Am I not right?"

"No; you are not a Yankee. I am going to release Mr. Surrington from his engagement."

Faith turned away her head as she spoke, for it seemed as if the spasm of pain that convulsed her heart must have crossed her face also. It was several minutes before Grace spoke, and when she did, Faith looked up at her with calm eyes.

"I have always thought," Grace said, "that you were free from the caprice that such an action would imply. Surely, Faith, no one has won your love in your distant home?"

Faith could not trust herself to talk much on such a subject.

"I have no wandering fancy for any far-away lover," she said, slowly. "But there are many reasons which prompt me to consider Mr. Surrington only as a friend."

Grace sank down at Faith's feet; she laid her head in her lap and sobbed as if her heart were sorely wounded. It was for Faith more than for herself, for, deep down in her heart, she felt a sort of vague triumph that was much more like pain than pleasure. Faith raised her sister's face.

"For whom is this weeping?" she asked with a tremble in her voice.

"For you, and for Surrington," cried Grace.

"He needs no commiseration," replied Faith; "and as for me, God helping me, I can do my labor alone. So, my dear Grace, let us talk no more about it."

A kind of child's intuition came to Grace so vividly at this moment that she could not help saying, and blushing painfully as she did so,—

"But you cannot possibly do this. I know I am very foolish to say so, but you are not doing this in any sort of way to please me; because if you are, I won't avail myself of any such kindness."

The head of Grace went down again upon Faith's lap.

"Oh, if you knew the strength of my love for you, Grace," murmured Faith, bending over and encircling her sister in her arms. "Ever since I first saw you," she continued, "when I had nothing to

love, your face was a promise of an earthly paradise to me, and most dearly have you fulfilled its assurance. Will you not, dear one, accept any gift I bring to you? Think, if you please, that I am colder hearted and of slower blood than my Southern sister; and be sure, always, when you think of me, that I am better able to combat life's troubles than you are. Dear Grace! look up at me."

Grace raised her eyes for a moment. A sort of exultation shone in Faith's face, — a buoyant excitement that almost deceived Faith herself, and made her think she had passed through the pain of her self-abnegation, and had entered upon the joy of recompense. She had made her duty her iconoclast, and she felt something of the spirit of a victor. Faith spoke again, but in a less firm voice.

"I know you will never speak of this to your future husband — nay, dear, he will be your husband. Let him think it was a womanly whim that made him free to marry you. And if in future years you are as happy with Hector as you wish, do not fail to love me with the warmth that has been so blessed to me."

Faith returned to her mother and her school. She did not risk a parting interview with Surrington — her heart was already wrenched too severely. She left for him a note, the contents of which paled his face with emotion. He received the idea that her love for him had been replaced by affection for another. It was the most natural thing for him to turn to Grace after the first shock of his disappointment was over.

Six months of patient toil for Faith. Her letters from Grace showed her happy and well. Faith's life was peaceful and monotonous. Mr. Falkland had returned to New York; her mother had become somewhat accustomed to her life, and Faith expected

all her future days to be even as these were, when, one morning, Hector Surrington awaited her in the parlor. She came down to meet him. With an impulse he seemed powerless to resist, he extended his arms and took her to his heart. Trembling, palpitating beneath that rain of kisses and tears, Faith forgot for a moment that Hector Surrington was hers no more. At last she attempted to withdraw herself from his arms; but he held her closer.

"O my darling!" he murmured, "why did you ever leave me? It is you only whom I have loved. Refused by you, I should have married Grace, because her beauty bewitched me, and you seemed to desire our union. Shall you send me away?"

Faith drew back. She looked with surprise into his face.

"And Grace?" she said.

A pallor came over his face.

"Have you not heard? Did you not get our message?" he asked.

Faith's hands grew cold. He saw by her face that she was ignorant.

"She is dead," he said; "drowned in the river. O Faith!"

He drew her again to his embrace. Holding her tightly, he told her how he had tried to save Grace, but how Heaven's summons had been stronger than his will — that she was dead before he could get her to the shore. He whispered in faltering accents that she had died happy in the poor love he had given her.

Faith's face seemed luminous; her soul realized that to the darling of her life the holocaust she had offered had given a divine joy.

In future years, Hector Surrington and his wife knew that out of heaven some loved eyes were happier for knowing that the two they had loved were living the dream that had blessed them in early youth.

MUSTER-TIME.

BY MISS H. R. HUDSON.

"I never dreaded any week so much as *this last one*," said Mrs. Humphreys, as she stood on the grass-level before the house of her neighbor Deacon Abijah Flint, talking to the deacon's wife.

"I'm sure I can say that too," rejoined her companion. "I told the deacon we might expect to lose everything we had, with such a lawless set in the town. When we lived down to M—— they had a muster there, and the deacon lost a cow, and no end of hens. Besides, I ha'n't seen a quiet minute for four days, a worryin' 'bout Bijah; he's just possessed to be over there on the field. And all sorts of desperate lookin' folks have come round. We're so lonesome here, I darsn't speak up sharp to loafers. Thank goodness, it's over!"

"Why," said the other, putting up a hand to shade her face from the sun, which, in early September, kept all its summer heat, "it's my opinion 't'a'nt over. The soldiers, mostly, got away this noon, but there's lots of riff-raff left, and to-morrow's Sunday. John says you don't begin to see trouble till they've had a week to get high in; he says the perlice are done with, and if something don't happen tonight or to-morrow night, he's out of his guess. He had his barn burnt ten years ago at muster, and I bather think he'll keep a lookout this time."

"His barn burnt!" was the anxious exclamation. "Dear me! The deacon is dreadful careless—dreadful. He don't think no more of such things 'n if he had a whole regiment to call in; and here he's only Ben and the boy, and we're a mile from anybody! Ben's gone off, too, to stay till Monday."

"Well, you tell him what I say. It's getting near tea-time," she added, as the kitchen clock struck four, "and I must be going."

The deacon's wife, whose appropriate name was Martha, revolved her neighbor's words apprehensively in her mind while she prepared supper. When it was ready, she was destined to have another cause of anxiety, for the deacon's first question as he sat down to the table was the brief inquiry:

"Where's Bijah?"

"I don't know. I thought he was with you. I ha'n't seen him since twelve o'clock."

The deacon, who had gotten in position to say grace, unfolded his hands and unclosed his eyes abruptly.

"He's on that pesky muster-field again, You jest keep supper hot, mother. I a'n't going to have my own son flying straight in my face!" And the deacon's coat-tails vanished through the outer door.

So Mrs. Flint kept the supper hot. Her daughter Lizzie, a young lady of eighteen, wondered "what on earth made her pa worry about Bijah!" and lounged away to finish a novel. Sam, the "boy," did the chores and milked the cows, while Mrs. Flint, with her knitting lying in her lap, sat peering disturbedly out into the dusk, anticipating stragglers.

It was quiet enough. Two or three suspicious-looking persons passed down the road, but did not stop. Darkness was silvered by moonlight, and the clock was on the stroke of nine, when the deacon's approach was announced by a vigorous scraping of the feet.

"Don't you hang back. Jest you go right in and show yourself," he was heard to say.

Abijah showed himself: a boy of ten, extremely muddy and crestfallen, but still himself, as appeared from his ravenous glance at the supper-table, and a knowing wink behind his hand at the "boy," who was tilting a chair by the fire.

It appeared from the deacon's remarks, as he sat pulling off his soiled boots, that Abijah had gone up the river with a set of "them muster-field scallywags," and had "got upsot." It appeared from Abijah's mutterings that "he couldn't help a goin'," and that it was always "jest so!" But the deacon's monitions and his son's whimperings were drowned in Mrs. Flint's exclamations of horror at the state of Abijah's garments. By the time the offender had received a supper and a lecture, and had been ordered to retire to his room "right after service" the next day, there to remain un-

til he had leave to do otherwise, every one was tired out and glad to go to bed.

Not till her head had touched the pillow, and the deacon's first faint snore had announced his unconsciousness, did the apprehensions of the afternoon recur to Mrs. Flint's mind. In another moment she was upright and wide awake as ever, seeing dreadful visions of burning barns, and anxiously considering the question of awakening her husband. Former experiences of the consequences of similar attempts to convince the incredulous deacon that she had cause of alarm, now deterred her; instead, she rose, and, throwing on a dressing-gown, sat down in a rocking-chair by the window.

All was so still without, the dim outlines, the dusky shadows, the faint moonlight, were so absolutely peaceful, that, in spite of her utmost efforts, her eyelids finally drooped again. An hour passed, perhaps was passed in disturbed dozing; then a growl from the dog beneath her window caused her to sit up straight again. An unsteady and approaching chorus was now borne to her ears. It died down, and next the immortal "Shoo Fly!" woke the echoes, nearer yet. The dog, Peter, immensely excited, barked and tugged at his cord, while the night-capped figure above sprang out of the rocking-chair and seized the deacon's arm.

"What on airth is the matter, Marthy?" asked the deacon, sitting up at last, after being pulled and pushed for three minutes.

"Somebody's coming! Don't you hear that?"

"What? That singin'? Folks goin' down the road, a'n't it?" was the drowsy response.

"Dear! dear! do wake up! It a'n't safel Who knows what they'll do?" And, as her words were emphasized by a fiercer bark from Peter, the deacon opened both eyes.

When he reached the window, three slouching figures were turning into the yard, and one threw itself at full length on the bench before the great elm-tree that stood between the barn and the house. Peter barked forth a perfect ecstasy of rage, as one maudlin creature held himself up by the tree and quavered forth the refrain,—

"And we'll all drink stone blind,
Johnny fill up the bowl!"

"Wal," commented the deacon, quizzically,

cally, with his head half out the window, "I sh'd think they *had* drunk! There, there, Peter! Hullo! what do you want down there?"

The singer, evidently supposing the deacon identical with the "Johnny" he had adjured, greeted this question with an enthusiastic outcry of welcome, offering to embrace the speaker forthwith, and to pledge him in a "glass of the bonny." His performing a sort of war-dance in witness of eagerness, nearly drove Peter wild, and it was some time before the sullen-looking individual crouching on the farther side of the tree could make himself heard.

"D—n your dog! We're travellin'."

"Wal, then," said the deacon, briefly, "travel! Don't be disturbin' honest folks at this time of night."

"We will," said the man, insolently, "when we're ready."

Mrs. Flint uttered a dismayed exclamation. The deacon became decided.

"Look here, my man! you're the only one in your senses, it seems,—just move on, and don't wait for no more speechifyin'; we can git along without it. Marthy," he added, in a subdued aside, "you hand me one of them pistols in the top bureau drawer. Don't you go to gittin' worried—I'm only goin' to show it."

Mrs. Flint shivered as the deacon put the fatal instrument out of the window and clicked it ominously. The man by the tree said some low and hurried words to his companions, among which the listeners distinguished the term "shiner," and seemed to be urging them to go on; accordingly, one staggered to his feet; but the musical drunkard, who had for the last two minutes been under the influence of the conviction that Peter was Jeff Davis in person, persisted in an excited harangue, in spite of the others' efforts to stop him. A struggle ensued, in the midst of which they came nearer the dog. In one last furious attempt to reach the invaders, Peter broke his cord and launched himself upon them. There was a cry of warning from the window, an oath, a desperate blow, and the deacon saw Peter stretched motionless on the ground.

The best men sometimes act from impulse. Almost before the indignant deacon knew it, he had fired upon Peter's murderer, and three dark figures were fleeing down the road, while his wife screamed be-

hind him, and a series of cries from the apartments of Lizzie and Abijah and Sam were followed by the appearance of those individuals. But no attention was paid to them until the body of Peter had been brought in, and it had been ascertained beyond doubt that the animal was dead; then his master, who thought a deal more of the dog than of the saint for whom he was named, expressed his feelings:

"Wal—I hope I hit him! Maybe it a'n't right, but I hope the man that killed Peter carried off some lead in him. There wa'n't such another dog in the county." And the speaker, grotesque in undress costume, wiped his eyes on his shirt-sleeve. "Killed the man, Marthy? Lord, no. He'll live to be hung yet!"

The rest of the night passed as quietly as Mrs. Flint's "nerves" would let it, and the morning found the family assembled at breakfast at the usual sabbath hour, eight o'clock. The body of Peter lay in the shed, reverently covered by a rug; Mrs. Flint was frying "flapjacks;" Lizzie crouched dismally by the fire; and the deacon set the third basket of peaches down by the pump, and washed his hands, as he said:

"I guess I'll spread them peaches up in the attic, mother. The cling-stones a'n't half ripe, but it's no use leavin' 'em on the trees to be stole. I sh'd think a quarter of 'em might 'a' been took a'ready. I'd jest like to know who does it. What's the matter with you?" he ended, abruptly, as Abijah, with his head tied in a handkerchief, appeared on the back stairs.

"Got toothache," was the mumbled reply.

Mrs. Flint looked anxious, but the deacon sat down to breakfast with a grim smile.

"I know all about that. I used to have some of the consarnedest toothaches Sunday mornings that ever were hearn tell on. It'll git well after service."

Abijah groaned. Mrs. Flint turned another flapjack.

"Father, I think you'd ought ter look out for things a little! I 'a'n't but just had strength enough to get breakfast, I got so frightened last night. I'm jest as sure that man you shot at 'll have it out with you somehow, as I am that I'm a standin' here! Do for mercy's sake get somebody!—there a'n't even a dog now; and do see to that barn-door fastenin'! Mis' Humphreys she come—"

"Well, well, Marthy! What fastenin'?"

"That smallest barn-door. The lock on it a'n't worth anything. I could break in there myself."

"Wal—I guess not so easy. There's a harsp somewheres up attic, though,—an old iron harsp; I guess I can make it tight enough. Don't you git to worritin' now! I'll bet considable on that feller's stayin' away arter this."

Between his wife's talking and Lizzie's whimpering, the deacon had a poor time eating breakfast. He was glad to shoulder the baskets and proceed to the attic, having given Abijah a parting charge to go and "git ready for church." Abijah, with his eye on the peaches, followed his father upstairs. Quiet reigned for a time; but, as Lizzie set the last cup away in the closet, the stillness was abruptly and alarmingly broken by a crash above, and a loud exclamation. The two women lost no time in gaining the attic, where the deacon was discovered under the eaves in a peculiar position, one foot and leg having descended through broken plastering into the room below, and the other being doubled uncomfortably beneath him, while the "harsp," the cause of this accident, was flourished in his hand as an accompaniment to some violent language.

The scene that followed is indescribable. The deacon having been finally hoisted out of his trap by the superhuman exertions of his wife and daughter, seconded by his own brave efforts, ended by fainting away on the attic floor. Mrs. Flint screamed:

"His leg is broken!"

The next cry was for Abijah, who answered at last from the kitchen.

"Bijah, you go to town and get Dr. Wilkins! Your father's broken his leg—go like lightning!"

I am sorry to chronicle the fact that an expression not unlike satisfaction was visible upon Abijah's face as he threw up the window and called:

"Sam!"

"What!"

"Father's broke his darned leg," said Abijah, cautiously lowering his voice. "You harness the horse."

Five minutes later, the stones flew from beneath the wheels as the wagon rattled round the corner; a half hour later, the doctor was on the spot. Such a day as that is best passed over in silence. In such

an emergency Mrs. Flint was not the calmest of women, nor was the deacon the most amiable of men. When the sufferer was on his own bed, and the leg was set satisfactorily, he seemed not much exhausted; for, with interludes of groaning, he declaimed against "harsps" and women-kind vigorously. It seemed that his wife was the cause of it all. "For," said the logical deacon, "ef you hadn't 'a' wanted that ere harsp, I shouldn't 'a' gone arter it, and should 'a' been settin' in church this blessed minnit."

Not a second's peace did Mrs. Flint and Lizzie have that day; not a thought did they give to anything but their irascible patient. Night brought no relief, for the deacon could not sleep, and his wife was loyally posted by his bedside. The rest of the household retired in disgust, and, at about eleven, the deacon was so worn out with talking and fuming that he fell asleep. Mrs. Flint set the shaded night-lamp in the entry, and was again drowsing in the moonlight, when a noise out by the barn startled her. She looked out, saw the front of the buildings glimmering whitely, and the squares of the doors; then, as she looked more steadily, became aware that the smallest door was partially open, and that a figure was passing through it; a queer figure, evidently that of a man.

For a moment she was rigid with horror; the next, she was whispering hoarsely in the deacon's ear:

"Bijah! Bijah! there's somebody in the barn!"

I leave the reader to imagine what followed. The patient, awakened from comfortable repose, unfortunately twisted his injured limb in his first motion. All his grievances thus being borne in upon his mind, the deacon, who was but a man, lost the last remnants of self-control, and launched an avalanche of indignation at the head of his much-enduring wife.

"For goodness' sake, Marthy, don't set round here and wake me up every time you see a shadder! When I do git to sleep, you'd let me stay there ef you had one speck o' feelin'! I don't care if there's eighty men in the barn!"

Mrs. Flint sat down and wrung her hands in a despair that only aggravated the deacon farther.

"Ob, dear me, dear me! There isn't a man within a mile!"

"Yes, there is! 'cordin' to you, there's one out in the barn."

Impelled by curiosity and fear, Mrs. Flint peered forth again. The man apparently had not moved.

"He's standing there; kind of in the shadow."

"In the shadder of your idee! What on alrth should he stand still for so long as this?"

"Let me move the bed along, so's't you can look," suggested his wife. "I tell you, Bijah, there's a man there!"

"Don't you touch the bed! I won't be moved. Sing out and scare him off."

Poor Mrs. Flint seized the deacon's cane and belabored the window-seat, as she cried out shrilly:

"Here! What are you a doing there?"

No answer, no motion; but the man was indubitably there, and the door surely open.

"He's deaf, likely," remarked the deacon. "Try him louder." And a short laugh rasped his wife's nerves so cruelly that, for once, the meek little woman was angry.

"Very well. If you want to lose everything you've got, just lay there and laugh. I'm sure I don't care. Most men would do different."

"Well, I ha'n't seen the thing. I couldn't do much ef I had. Seems something like a ghost, don't it?"

"Tell me something to do, and I'll do it."

"Why, hail him agin, if you must do something. Tell him you'll fire if he don't get out of the way."

"I couldn't fire to save my life!"

"Goodness sake! Take that nighest pistol out of the drawer, p'int it at him and pull the trigger. I don't believe it'll do much harm to fire at a shadder!" said the deacon, mindful of the fact that the "nighest pistol" was not loaded.

"But I might hit him!"

"Don't p'int at him then; p'int t'other way."

Mrs. Flint took up one of the pistols, trembling in every limb.

"I'll just fire t'other way then," she said, faintly, "and that'll scare him."

"Go ahead!"

Mrs. Flint, with a rumbling in her ears and a mist before her eyes, turned the pistol, anyway, so long as it did not point toward the barn door, and pulled the trigger. A report followed, and a desperate exclamation

tion from the bed, as the little woman dropped into a chair.

"Put down that pesky thing?" roared the deacon, struggling into a sitting posture through sheer excitement. "You've got the wrong one—put it down, I say! Marthy," he concluded, solemnly, "fetch the lamp. It's my opinion you come within one inch of my head. You hit the bed, anyway."

Mrs. Flint, gray with horror, obeyed mechanically. If the deacon had told her she had hit the kitchen stove, she would not have doubted it. She brought the lamp, and was nearly knocked down by the breathless Lizzie, in the passage.

"Mother, say, who fired? Say, there's somebody up in the attic! What is the matter? Oh, my!" she concluded, for the deacon, with a tragical countenance, was pointing to a round hole in the bed-post and to indentations in the wall beyond.

Mrs. Flint could have fainted. A glance from the window saved her, and she exclaimed:

"Bijah, he 'a'n't stirred! he's right there!"

"I don't see any pertikeler reason why he should," retorted her husband, grimly, "as long as he was in front of you. Ef he'd ben sorter sideways, like me, it might 'a' ben different. Don't you touch another pistol while I'm round, Marthy! I wouldn't lay here an' take my chances agin for a cool thousand."

Lizzie's involuntary scream, as her eyes followed her mother's pointing finger, convinced the deacon at last that *something* was to be seen. He forthwith directed that his bed should be drawn along. This being done, he got a very distinct view of a bulky figure that appeared to be wedged in the door.

"That's queer!"

The deacon said nothing more for some time, but intently regarded the figure. He broke the silence by two words—

"Call Bijah."

"I don't dare go," shivered Lizzie. "The attic door is wide open, and I've heard noises all night."

Mrs. Flint was in no condition to stir. The deacon looked despairingly from one to the other.

"I never did see nothing like this! Open the door!"

Lizzie obeyed, and the deacon shouted:

"Bijah!"

"Bijah!" quavered Lizzie, following suit.

No answer. Mrs. Flint, nerved by alarm, found strength to reach Abijah's room, and pushed open the door. The bed was empty. At this juncture a rending noise in the attic startled the deacon himself. A muffled voice that sounded something like Abijah's was heard calling frantically:

"Mother! Mother!"

Mrs. Flint, Lizzie and Sam, who here first appeared, made a common rush for the stairs. There was great confusion of noises above, much trampling, and presently before the deacon's astonished eyes appeared a procession of three, pulling along his limping son and heir, who collapsed entirely on the threshold, and put up both hands to hide his stained face.

"Wal, what now?" inquired the father, prepared for anything.

"He's all stuck up with peaches," said Lizzie. "Stop whimpering, Bijah, you a'n't hurt."

"He went through in the same place you did," explained pallid Mrs. Flint.

"Served him right. Went up there to steal peaches, eh? I'll attend to you. Sam, look here; just you run out and pull that figger from between the barn doors."

Sam demurred.

"Take a look at it," said the deacon, sternly; "then do you march out and bring it up here to me, and tomorrow morning pack up your things and leave."

The bewildered "boy" looked so genuinely amazed, that another suspicion gained ground in the deacon's mind. He went on, to the surprise of Lizzie and his wife:

"Wal, go and fetch it, anyway! You've seen that figger afore. You helped me make it, if I aint mistaken."

Sam looked out again, looked harder, then, with a grin of delight, vanished through the door. The deacon turned to Abijah.

"Now," said he, with the calm of utter conviction in his voice, "I know you put that scarecrow there. Jest tell the whole story, or take the consequences."

Abijah was afraid of his father, and more afraid of consequences; but, in his excited state, and with his propensity to shield himself, the story came rather fragmentarily. The substance of the confession was that the sin had been caused by a desire for

fun and peaches. Abijah had enjoyed the thought of alarming the family, had wedged the scarecrow in the barn door, had then quietly crept up to his room, and tried to attract attention by firing stones against the boards near the deceptive figure. When the attention of his father and mother was at last drawn to it, Abijah had slipped across the passage and up the attic stairs, where were the peaches of his desire. Terrified at hearing his name called, and at the sound of footsteps below, he had crept incautiously under the eaves, and had presently broken through with a crash that frightened his wits quite away. With his usual truthful-

ness and honor, he had hoped to throw the blame of the scarecrow business upon Sam. His unfortunate fall had upset all his schemes, and Abijah sat before his family a disgraced and dirty boy—for in his haste to hide himself he had rolled over several peaches.

With his explanation ended the excitement of the occasion; but from that time forth "muster" was a by-word in the family. The loquacious deacon never tired of telling the story, and of adding, with a twinkle in his eye:

"That was the time when Marthy learned to use a pistol."

MISS VASCOUR'S LOVER.

BY AMANDA M. HALE.

"So Miss Vascour has a lover," said Fred. "Where did she find him?"

"In a hogshead," I replied, soberly.

"What?"

"In a hogshead."

"I asked you where Miss Vascour found her lover."

"And I repeat that she found him in a hogshead."

Fred ceased twirling the golden tassels of an azure velvet smoking-cap, poised upon his finger tips, and looked at me in unmitigated surprise.

"What do you mean, you absurd woman?" he said.

The compliment did not move me. It was not a novelty.

"Just what I say."

"Then there must be a story to tell. Just bring that cushion for my foot, and let's have it—that's a darling."

There's no harm in saying that Fred's coaxing is irresistible; for the dear fellow is my brother, and since he came home from the war, consecrated by the bloody baptism of Chickamauga and Stone River, he had become doubly our hero, and the whole family had resolved itself into a committee of ways and means to promote his pleasure.

I was the self-constituted story-teller. Coming home every Saturday from Mrs. Forsyth's boarding-house, I related the petty

dramas that had been enacted under my eyes, giving what life and reality I could to the *dramatis personæ*, and only borrowing from imagination an occasional gleam or two of color. Fred said I was a perfect artist. He knew Helen De Ruyter, and Captain Ellingwood, and Miss Vascour, just as well as I did, and his surprise was quite natural when I told him that Miss Vascour—the dainty highbred creature—found her lover in a hogshead.

"Now for a romance!" And Fred established himself upon his cushions, and turned his white thin face towards me with an air of confident expectancy that it was a happiness to gratify. So I began a long seam, and my story, at the same time:

I had been at Mrs. Forsyth's long enough to feel quite at home, when, one morning, I noticed a superfluous plate was upon the table, and an empty chair was evidently waiting for somebody.

"Is there a new-comer, Mrs. Forsyth?" cried out Helen De Ruyter, in that clear impetuous voice of hers.

"Yes. A Miss Vascour."

"And who is Miss Vascour?"

"She is a day governess somewhere in the city," replied Mrs. Forsyth.

"O!"

Helen De Ruyter was an heiress and a belle, gave us the fashions, and communi-

cated a stylish air to our establishment. That little interjection spoke volumes.

The four clerks on the other side of the table tittered feebly, and Dr. Morrison, Miss De Ruyter's special adorer, repeated in an oily tone:

"A day governess!"

The syllables had hardly died away on the air before the door opened and a lady came in.

"Miss Vascour?" pronounced our hostess.

I was aware of a flash of surprise passing over the faces at the table, and Mr. Deane, the lawyer, rose immediately, and set Miss Vascour's chair in its place. I caught a gleam of malice in Helen De Ruyter's wickedly beautiful gray eyes, and said to myself, "One enemy already."

It was true. She never forgave Miss Vascour that little involuntary attention on the part of Mr. Deane. The two ladies were *vis-à-vis*. I tried to distract Miss Vascour's attention by various small diversions. I gave her the sugar and cream, and helped her to biscuit—all in the hope that she would not notice Miss De Ruyter's scornful ignoring of her presence.

I might have spared my strategy. The calm, proud, sweet face gave no recognition of any impertinence. I doubt if she saw the stylish figure in the showy morning-wrapper that faced her. Mr. Deane was speaking to her, and I caught the sound of her voice, so soft and mellow, not pitched in that high shrill key so usual and so disagreeable, but musical and flowing, reminding one of summer birds and all the sweet sounds of nature. Such a still sweet face—the slow smiles lighting the limpid eyes before they dimpled the cheeks—so full of repose, but thrilling in its hint of latent power, dark and clear in its coloring, no brilliancy, except in the sweet lips that were crimson as the autumn leaf—heavy braids of black hair lying on the temples and outlining the low perfect forehead. A face out of a picture, such as looks at you from the canvas of the early masters, who painted saints and Madonnas—a face too beautiful for earth, but not happy enough for heaven, having a lingering sorrow that disturbed its perfect sweetness; an eagerness and repressed vehemence of nature, that flashed out now and then in waves of delicate color over the smooth skin, or shone, diamond bright, in the large beautiful eyes.

Miss Vascour went out and in among us reticent and proud, but gentle, and most grateful for any courtesy; a whole winter passed before any of us knew her. One day—it was the last of February—I came home early, and going up stairs, saw that Miss Vascour's door was ajar.

"Wont you come in?" She looked out, a morning brightness suffusing her face.

I went, of course. It was pleasant to be distinguished, and I knew that no one in the house, except the maid and landlady, had ever seen the inside of Miss Vascour's room.

"You look happy," I said.

"I am. I have had news from home that makes me glad."

I looked about me. The room was like her—quiet, harmonious, with just a gleam of splendor. There was no clutter of *bijouterie*, none of the fashionable littering of mantel, and tables, and whatnots with small articles, which makes a modern parlor look like a toyshop. There were a good many books, a landscape of Turner's, a lithographed Madonna, and one or two plaster casts from some real statue. Then there was a single rose in the window, in luxuriant bloom, a pot of hyacinths, that saturated the room with their pungent sweetness, and a vine of English ivy about a window, framing it in verdure, making it look like an opening into green summer gardens, instead of the cold winter landscape which lay outside the walls.

Miss Vascour took up her work again. It was a little velvet sack, which I had noticed was beginning to look frayed about the edges and defaced along the seams, but under her enchanting fingers it was undergoing a transformation into a charming basque.

"Poor but proud, you see," she said, smiling, as I looked at her work.

"Then you *are* poor!" I said, absently.

She laughed gayly.

"Did you think that a day governess went out teaching for recreation?"

"But I should think the governess's salary would make you independent," I ventured to say.

"Ah! if you only knew what a deal of duty it does—what a vast extent of surface it is spread over."

I began to see how it was.

"And what was the pleasant news from home?" I asked.

A bright smile swept away the soberness which had come over her face.

"Sister Isabel is going to be married, and I shall be wanted at home for the wedding in June," she answered.

"How many are there besides Isabel?"

"Johnny, who is in college; Maud, a five-year-old baby, and mother."

It was a heedless question. Her eyes swam instantly.

"Father was a minister," she sobbed.

"He died last winter—you did not guess it, because we were too poor for me to wear mourning."

I divined the rest of the orphan's story. I picked up the velvet basque which had fallen from her hand, and said, while I lightly brushed its soft nap:

"This must be an heirloom, I am sure. It would cost a fortune now-a-days."

"It was my mother's wedding cloak. Give it to me now. You have made me cry, and hindered my work, and yet I am going to forgive you."

I drew a cricket near her, and looked up into her now smiling eyes.

"You don't cry often now," I said.

"You keep your tears in your heart, and that is what makes your face so pathetic sometimes."

"Little sorcerer! How do you know?"

"It would be much better to cry and have it over," I pursued.

"I can't," she answered. "It makes my head ache and my eyes red, so I don't care to be seen, and wastes my time. I can't afford to cry. But I asked you in here to sing to me."

"Did you? I'll sing to you every day if you'll let me come," I said, eagerly.

"Will you? It is a compact then—now sing."

I did sing. I searched among the dear homely ballads that I knew for songs to please her; I sung gay carols and sunny glees; I hummed sweet opera airs—I tried to recall to her those exquisite songs without words, in which I delighted, and at last, I gave her sweet hymns and stately anthems, and tender touching prayers that had flowed out from some pure soul in music. And she listened, her hands crossed in her lap, and her face like one rapt in holy dreams. I stopped, at last, for I saw her heart was full.

"Thank you—" drawing a long sigh.

I rose.

"Now I am going down stairs so you can finish your work. But will you come down an hour before dinner?"

"If I can, but I must finish this first. Don't you wish things were immortal?" she said, playfully.

"Not quite—for then I should have to wear my cloak that I hate so to the end of time. But if I had a store of velvets and silks, I don't know."

And so I left her. I met Helen De Ruyter on the stairs, just come out in a new toilet—a maze of sheeny silks and misty lace.

"Where have you been?" she asked.

"In Miss Vascour's room."

She curled her lip.

"What kind of a place is it?"

"One that suits her," I said, quietly.

Two hours after the parlor door opened and Miss Vascour appeared in the velvet basque.

"O, come in," I cried. "Miss De Ruyter has gone out with one of her beaux, and we shall be very cosy."

She smoothed down her sleeves, caressingly.

"How do you like it? All the shabbiness hidden, is it not, and good for another four years, at least?"

"Charming," I said, making the graceful figure revolve for my pleasure. "Now sit down, and tell me more about Isabel. We can have such a nice talk alone."

Alas for the fallacy of human expectations! The bell rang, there was a rustle of silks in the hall, and I fled. It was the mother and aunt of the day governess's pupils, called to patronize the young lady. I forgot my chagrin in a book, heard the bell ring again, dreamily, and at last finished my book, and went down stairs fifteen minutes before dinner. There were voices in the parlor, as I paused on the threshold—not Dr. Morrison's oily tones, nor yet Mr. Deane's clear incisive emphasis.

Mrs. Forsyth came through the hall.

"Who is here, Mrs. Forsyth?"

"Only Captain Ellingwood!"

The landlady was radiant.

"O! haven't I heard of him before?"

"I dare say—he is Miss De Ruyter's special ambition."

Ah! I remembered. Captain Ellingwood, when he was not at sea in the *Arabia*, honored Mrs. Forsyth's house with his presence. A fastidious, unimpressible man,

I was told, true as steel and as gold, a hero of the nineteenth century—and a bachelor. Miss De Ruyter had aimed her graces in vain. Captain Ellingwood had known her three years, and was still a bachelor. What wonder that Miss De Ruyter was indignant. I opened the door, curious to see this impersonation of modern chivalry. Miss Vascour was sitting there, and presented me, in her graceful way. A stately man, dignified and noble, with power in every feature of the handsome face. I stole a look at Miss Vascour. There was a red flush upon the white cheek, and a new gleam in the still dark eye. Then I guessed that they had been *tete-a-tete* for a whole hour. Not to be *de trop*, I took a magazine, and retired to a corner, and I must confess that the conversation went on nicely without me. Presently Miss De Ruyter burst into the room, in a pretty flutter of excitement.

"Why, Captain Ellingwood, you have fairly stolen a march upon us," exclaimed the beauty. "We did not expect the Arabia till the tenth, and here you are while it is yet February!"

"You flatter me, Miss De Ruyter. I never could have supposed that my coming would be anticipated. The Arabia is due on the twenty-sixth, so that I am really behind my time."

"Was it the twenty-sixth?" said Miss De Ruyter, knitting her pretty eyebrows. "Well, I am good for nothing at remembering figures." And the lady pushed an ottoman towards him, and sat down so as to interpose her tall person between him and Miss Vascour.

I watched the slow color creeping into Miss Vascour's face, and the flash of anger in Captain Ellingwood's keen eyes. He wheeled an armchair forward.

"Allow me to offer you this, Miss De Ruyter."

She crimsoned, bit her lip, and then after a moment's delay spread her flowing drapery in the chair he had set for her. Mr. Deane came in just here, and finding an empty seat near Miss Vascour, appropriated it. I watched the little scene—saw Miss De Ruyter's futile efforts to engross them both—saw Captain Ellingwood's eyes stray away from her brilliant complexion and showy person, to rest upon Miss Vascour's pure still face.

Presently going out to dinner, somebody pinched me.

"Helen De Ruyter, I'll prosecute you for an assault."

"Pshaw! that didn't hurt you, I know. I wanted you to look around," she said, in an energetic whisper.

"Why?"

"Why?" impatiently. "Don't you see that she is setting her cap for Captain Ellingwood?"

"Who?"

"Miss Vascour, of course." And the beauty's face darkened.

I looked at them.

"He does seem to be very much interested in her, certainly," I said, maliciously.

"You are very absurd," she returned, angrily. "Do you think he would marry a mere adventuress as she is?"

"There you are mistaken, Miss De Ruyter. Miss Vascour is a Brahmin of the Brahmins," I said, coolly. "The family are as proud as—"

"They are poor," interrupted Miss De Ruyter. "But Captain Ellingwood intends to remain a bachelor. You had better tell her so, since she seems to be a protegee of yours."

"Excuse me, but had you not better tell her yourself? You have known him long—no one would be more likely to have ascertained his intentions in regard to marriage than Miss De Ruyter."

She gave me a black look, and we parted at the table.

A month drifted away, and April was close by. All this time our drama was approaching a denouement. Miss Vascour was lovely and ladylike, and Helen De Ruyter was torn with jealousy. She had surely lost Mr. Deane, who worshipped the very folds of Miss Vascour's dress—adored her afar off, with a silent worship, which might or might not find expression, according as circumstances wrought, for he was a man of the world, acute, able and self-conscious, not a man to venture much, by no means a man to risk a deliberate offer unless he had good reason for thinking he should be accepted. So it was just possible that after loving Miss Vascour, he might marry Helen De Ruyter.

But Captain Ellingwood was of another stamp—not to be easily thwarted, to let anything come between him and Miss Vascour, if he loved her. But did he love her? I was as curious about it as Helen De Ruyter.

He came into the parlor one afternoon, when I was sitting alone, gave a quick glance around the room, and sat down with a disappointed air. My wicked genius prompted me to tease him for a scent.

"She isn't here, you perceive," I said, quietly.

"Who isn't here?" he returned, coloring a little.

"Miss Vascour. You were looking for her, weren't you?"

"How do you know?" he demanded, half smiling. "Are you a clairvoyant?"

"One doesn't need to be a clairvoyant to see some things," I answered, audaciously. He bent his keen eyes upon me.

"What things, for instance?"

I had made the plunge. Advance was as safe as retreat.

"And then one cannot help hearing what the world says," I continued.

"Mrs. Forsyth's world, I suppose. Well, what does the world say?"

He was unwinding my worsteds with some embarrassment, but looking rather pleased and curious.

"The world says that Captain Ellingwood, the unvanquished hero of a hundred sieges, the fastidious, the incorrigible, is in love with Miss Vascour."

He reddened a little.

"This is what the world says."

"And what do you say?" he asked.

"I say the world is very stupid and foolish, as it always is—that with Captain Ellingwood, admiring and liking are a long way from loving, and that while his intellect appreciates and his taste approves Miss Vascour, his heart is entirely untouched—is, indeed, in that callous and half-petrified state which might be expected in a heart that had resisted so many attacks."

In an instant, I saw by the conscious look which overswept his face that I had stated the case correctly.

"And suppose I admit this hypothesis," he said, smiling, "whose fault would it be, if fault there is?"

"Nobody's except Captain Ellingwood. Not Miss Vascour's, certainly."

"If I were a man, I would fall in love with her."

"Would you? But then you might not find it easy to fall in love."

"I would be a man, and not a fossil," I cried, indignantly.

He laughed.

"My dear little woman, why do you care?"

"Because she is such a true sweet woman," I said, vehemently. "I hate to see her wasting her life in thankless work—working for other people and not for her own."

"Such work brings its reward," he said, quietly; "and yet it is sad. But there is Deane—he is rich, and will marry her by-and-by."

I gave him a sharp look. Nothing but simple friendliness in his face.

"I don't know that it would please me. Can he love her enough? O, she needs—she ought to have so much."

He looked surprised at my enthusiasm.

"A man would be a villain to marry Miss Vascour without loving her. She is very graceful and lovely—very good, too, as I believe," he replied, with quiet gravity.

"Good! Captain Ellingwood, I see that she does not show herself to you as she does to me."

"Doesn't she? Then it is hardly fair to call me a fossil because I don't look at her through your eyes."

"Forgive me, Captain Ellingwood. I was vexed because you wouldn't praise her."

"I will praise her as much as you like. Do you ever think of her as a dove, when you see her? Something in the grace of her movements, in the soft delicate colors she always wears, but more I think, in the exquisite precision of everything about her, her dainty niceness of apparel, in the charming smoothness of her plumage—if I may so speak—remind me of the doves."

"O Captain Ellingwood, if you are ever really in love, may I be there to see," I said, laughingly.

"I bide my time. But how can you fancy Miss Vascour among any rough surroundings—at sea in a storm, for example, or out of doors in a high wind?"

"I saw her come in the other day—there was a perfect gale in the street—but her plumage, as you call it, was entirely unruined. I should have been blown to shreds."

He smiled.

"Just as I should have thought. Now can you imagine a rough fellow like me laying claim to such a delicate creature? Don't you see she was made for the quiet places of the world, where the wind does not blow; for the luxurious fireside, where all her

graces would be at home, and in harmony with everything around her? But my wife must have something of the gipsy element."

"Ah, Captain Ellingwood, that shows you don't know Miss Vascour, after all. I could tell you things—but I shall not—you shall find them out for yourself."

"I will try; but, meanwhile, I think Mr. Deane will carry away the prize."

"I hope he will, and that you will repent when it is too late."

"True feminine cruelty," he said, and I left him, half angry.

As I turned to go out, Helen De Ruyter crossed the balcony in front of the parlor windows. She came into the hall, her black eyes glittering like diamonds, and her cheeks aflame.

"What have you and Captain Ellingwood been talking about so long? Here have I been haunting the balcony and dining-room alternately, for half an hour, because Katrina said you two were *tete a-tete* in the parlor. What were you talking about? Plotting treason, or—ah, I have it—match-making!"

"We were talking about Miss Vascour," I said, quietly.

She gave a quick start.

"And what did he say? He's too wise to fall into your snare, *ma chere*. Captain Ellingwood is not a marrying man."

"So you told me before."

"Wasn't I right? Did you ask him? What did he say?" she demanded, breathlessly.

"I really must refer you to the gentleman himself," I said, as I broke away from her, and ran up stairs.

So he did not love Miss Vascour, after all. How provoking! My castle in the air was only the baseless fabric of a vision. It was a great pity. He would never find any one lovelier, or more noble, and was I mistaken in thinking that Miss Vascour regarded him with favor?

Something in her manner, a new softness in her always gentle ways, some new feeling shining in her face, and bestowing a sweeter beauty—these things I had noticed, and set down to Captain Ellingwood's account.

That afternoon I was returning home through one of the quiet streets, and came upon Miss Vascour and Mr. Deane, walking so slowly, that I could scarcely avoid overtaking them. She started, as I came

up, and turned towards me a pale agitated face.

"I—I am going down this way, Mr. Deane," and she put a fluttering hand upon mine, and drew me down into another street.

Mr. Deane went straight forward, giving a little sharp nod, as we left him, but not glancing at us.

"Now, Miss Vascour, what have you been saying to Mr. Deane?" I began, but her answer—almost a sob—sobered me, in a moment.

"Don't! I am inexpressibly pained. Don't ask me anything, dear."

We had an hour before dinner, and I suggested a quick walk out toward the country. She caught eagerly at the proposal, and we went on for a half hour, without speaking. We climbed a height, at last, and the city lay behind us, an inlet of the harbor at our feet, and far away, the gray sea. A wild March wind was sweeping over hill, and the sun swam in red angry clouds. We stopped, catching a quick breath, and holding our cloaks fast.

"Ah, I wish we could conquer everything in life as easily as we can outwalk and withstand this rude March wind," she said, while the wind roared and whistled around us.

"Our own wayward hearts, do you mean?"

She looked at me suddenly, while the beautiful eyes filled.

"O Alice, do you think mine is a wayward heart? I hope not—I hope I am not ungrateful or unappreciative—but I must be true," she said, with emotion.

"And so you felt compelled to say to Mr. Deane. It is a pity, for I believe he loves you truly."

A look crossed her face, as if the words hurt her.

"You would not say so if you knew how far I am from thinking I could ever care for him. It would be impossible—quite impossible," she added, seeming to speak more to herself than to me.

"And yet Mr. Deane is an honorable man, clever, polished, and making his way in the world."

She moved uneasily.

"It is this very polish—this superficial smoothness that repels me."

"What would you have?"

"Something higher and sterner, no mat-

ter if it were more rough. If one were strong, and true, and brave, I don't think I should miss those exterior refinements—those conventional graces that do so much for Mr. Deane."

Whom was she thinking of? Or was it only an ideal? She was looking down towards the harbor full of ships at anchor.

"That is the Arabia, Captain Ellingwood's vessel," I said.

Her face kindled, and her eager eyes sought the place which I indicated.

"Do you know he goes to sea in another month?"

"No? Does he?" the color vanishing from her face.

"Yes. He has lain a long time in the harbor, now—waiting for some repairs, I think. I have a sister who goes to sea with her husband. How would you like that?" I said, gayly, as we started homeward.

"*Cela depend!*" she answered, blushing.

"Upon the sailor, I suppose," I returned, laughing. "But it would be a doleful life for me."

"I don't know—I love the sea, and if my love and my life were there, I should prefer it to land," she said, softly.

"I'll tell Captain Ellingwood that," I began, mischievously.

She turned a perfectly white frightened face on me.

"Ah forgive me?" I cried in remorse. "How could you think I was in earnest?"

I was punished by seeing her particularly reserved with him for a whole week, and the captain, after looking at me suspiciously, accepted his fate, and spent his evenings teaching Miss De Ruyter chess.

That was her unfailing resource. Every gentleman who came to the house had the honor of teaching her that intricate game, but notwithstanding her numerous instructors, she never seemed to make any progress.

At the end of that week came Easter Sunday. Miss Vascour came down to breakfast, looking, as Mrs. Forsyth said, as if she had been dreaming of the angels. Her morning face was always beautiful, so full of peaceful sunshine—a light, too still and pure to be called brightness, looking out of the limpid brown eyes, and lingering in the tender dimples and curves of her sweet mouth.

"Will you go to church with me this morning?" she said, in a low tone, as we sat at breakfast. "It is Easter, you know."

"Yes, I will go. Have you an offering for the altar?"

"I'm afraid only a poor one."

Captain Ellingwood's keen eyes were upon us, and it was not favorable to close confidence. He came beside us, as we went out together.

"Will you let me go with you, this morning? You ought to indemnify me in some way for the past week," he said, detaining us.

Miss Vascour threw the reply upon me, and stood still, stroking little Patrick's curls.

Patrick O'Mahoney was a little blossom of a boy, the pride and delight of the cook's warm Irish heart. The little fellow clung to Miss Vascour's dress, and laid his round face in its folds, quite in awe of the grave captain, who watched him with a smile, that was half surprise half pleasure.

"Is it because it is Easter that you are so—what shall I call it, Miss Vascour—tolerant of that little specimen of the *canaille*?" said the captain. "I never could have thought of Miss Vascour and a little Irish boy in the same connection."

The white hand moved rather restlessly among the reddish curls on the little uneasy head, as she said:

"I don't know what strange faucy you may have about me, Captain Ellingwood, but little Patrick and I have always been very good friends."

"What would you think if you were told that she washes his face mornings, and tidies him for breakfast?" I said, abruptly.

Captain Ellingwood lifted his eyebrows, playfully exaggerating his astonishment, and just then Mr. Deane passed through the hall, on his way out, closing the door after him, with emphasis, and so we parted.

An hour afterward Miss Vascour ran up to my dormitory, on the floor above her own, and tapped at the door. Her hands were full of flowers, when I opened it—violets, blue, and white, and odorous, as if they had all winter been hoarding up sweetness; some sprays of fern thrown into relief, and a few pendent wreaths of the mitchella intertwined.

"My Easter offering," she said, with a radiant face.

"Captain Ellingwood sent them?"

She nodded, smilingly.

"You are all ready for church?" I asked.

"Yes."

She retreated a step, whirling around in graceful sport.

"My new dress, you see. How do you like it?"

"Perfect."

It was an exquisite toilet. From the smooth braids of glossy hair to the sweeping folds of the pretty poplin, everything was *comme il faut*.

"Dove-colored, too! What will Captain Ellingwood say?"

"What?" in surprise.

"Run down stairs now, and don't disturb me. I'll call for you when I'm ready."

She went down, singing a hymn.

I heard the low music, as I proceeded with my toilet. Suddenly a loud shriek broke upon the Sabbath stillness of the house—another and another. I rushed out trembling. Miss Vascour ran down stairs before me, with the speed of the wind. Another shriek. It was from the basement. I fled thither, and stumbled over the housemaid in the doorway.

"For pity's sake, Ellen, what is the matter?"

"Och," screamed the girl, wringing her hands, "it's little Patrick that's fell into the hogshead, and I can't get him out, and he'll be drowned intirely and his mother left him in my care, the day. Och, whina, whina!"

I ran past her to the kitchen, but Miss Vascour was there before me. The hogshead was sunk in the ground, nearly to its top—and poor Patrick's little white face was disappearing under the cold dark water for the last time. Before I could think or speak, Miss Vascour had gathered her flowing drapery around her, put her small hands upon the edge of the hogshead, and gently and easily lowered herself into it. She stooped to find the child, the water rippling around her neck, and saturating her braids. In a moment she had lifted him out, and I took him from her hands, ghastly, cold and stark, his reddish curls dripping with water, and all the light gone out of his pretty blue eyes. Ellen caught him from my arms.

"Och my darlint, will his mother ever be after forgiving me for letting the swate child go and get drowned? Och, woe's me, woe's me, woe's me. Holy Mother have pity!" cried the poor girl.

"He isn't drowned," cried Miss Vascour, from her hog-head. "Don't you see he can't be? O Mrs. Forsyth!" That lady

had rushed to the rescue, and was circumnavigating the hogshead in the utmost perplexity and consternation. "O Mrs. Forsyth, take the child, and let Ellen run quickly for the doctor. There's not a moment to be lost."

Everybody seemed to appreciate that fact, and hurried away in different directions. I turned to Miss Vascour.

"How am I ever to get out?" she said, dolefully.

The cold water was around her shoulders, and her teeth were chattering.

"If you could put something in here that I could step upon," she said, half crying, as the excitement died away.

I ran into the house, encountering Captain Ellingwood in the passage, coming in with grave inquiring looks, that seemed to ask what all this hubbub was about. With true feminine instinct, I cried:

"O Captain Ellingwood, come and take her out."

I led the way back, swiftly, and the captain followed, only understanding that his services were needed. The situation was ludicrous. It would be quite impossible to do justice to the astonishment in Captain Ellingwood's face. I laughed, merrily.

"Don't laugh," cried Miss Vascour, piteously, and with a shiver. "I know I look absurd, but I'm so cold."

"Little Patrick fell in, and she took him out. He would have been drowned," I said to the captain.

He stooped—a little hand was laid upon each of his shoulders, and he lifted her out tenderly, setting her down upon *terra firma*, and looking at her as she stood there, pale and beautiful, and wet as an ocean nymph, with eyes that were strangely soft. I think he took her into his heart at that moment.

"Poor little dove!" he said.

A flush crept slowly into her cheeks.

"Her plumage is sadly ruffled this time," I said.

"Well! There has been quite a scene," said Helen De Ruyter, entering upon the stage. "But your dress is ruined," she added, surveying Miss Vascour.

"There might be a worse wreck," said the captain. Helen looked at him sharply.

I drew Miss Vascour away. By and-by, word came that Patrick was restored. There was no church-going that day. I treated Miss Vascour as unmercifully as if I had been educated in a hydropathic insti-

tution. She did not go down to dinner, but in the evening Captain Ellingwood came to her door. The little parlor smiled its prettiest for him, and Miss Vascour was lovely in the languor that followed upon the morning's excitement. After a time, I discreetly withdrew.

May morning, Miss Vascour stood in my door—her face aglow, and her heart's scent shining out of her happy eyes. I guessed in a moment. In June she went home to prepare for her own bridal. And when Captain Ellingwood made his next voyage, his bonny wife sailed with him.

MR. MANLY'S EXPERIENCE OF KEROSENE.

BY ANNA MORRIS.

It was Jenkins, my old friend Jenkins, who first called my attention to the fact that I was squandering money by using gas instead of kerosene. Of course I knew that my gas bills were high, and sometimes grumbled when one larger than usual was presented; still, I enjoyed my well-lighted house, and had never thought of a change until one evening last fall, when Jenkins and his wife ran in for an hour's chat after tea, as they often do.

Jenkins introduced the subject by exclaiming as he entered:

"Why, you are a blaze of light. I really thought as I crossed the street that you must have a private illumination, or something of the kind going on here. I say, old fellow, I am glad I don't have to foot your gas bills!"

"Are not your own equally heavy?" I inquired. "Your house is larger than ours,"

"My gas bills! Bless your heart, Manly, I haven't used any gas for three months! Why, I should end in the poorhouse! Such

exorbitant prices—such a swindle from beginning to end! No sir! I burn kerosene oil, and get more light and more satisfaction for one-fourth the expense."

Here his wife chimed in, and they talked kerosene steadily for two hours.

I could see my wife didn't like it much from some quiet remarks that she made, but the stream of kerosene swept all these aside, as well as what were termed my prejudices in favor of gas.

I didn't say much to Mrs. Manly on the subject after our guests departed, but thought the matter over in the "silent watches," and, as the result of my cogitations, I announced to my wife as I left the house the next morning, "I think we will try how we like kerosene. I will send home some lamps to-day."

She did not look exactly delighted, but made no reply, and I started for my office. I had gone but a few steps when I met the man who usually brought the gas bill to the house.

"Ah, good-morning, Mr. Manly!" said

he. "May I hand your bill to you, instead of going to the house?"

"Certainly," I answered, drawing forth my portemonnaie: "I may as well pay it now as any time. I trust," I continued, as I took out the three five dollar bills required, "that my next quarter's bill for light will not be one-fourth of this amount."

"Indeed!" said the clerk, with a somewhat puzzled air; "how do you expect to make such a reduction?"

"By burning kerosene," I answered, with perhaps a shade of severity in my manner, "and thereby dispensing with the gas swindle! Yes sir," I continued, planting my cane more firmly on the sidewalk, and warming with my subject, "I am going this very day to buy lamps and kerosene, and begin a new order of things in my house. I am determined to be imposed on no longer, and you may tell your employers so from me!"

I turned and left him before he could reply, and walked directly to a lamp store, where I purchased the handsomest pair of lamps that I could find. I was particular to select handsome lamps. "A thing of beauty is a joy forever," I said to myself, and, moreover, the feminine mind is easily swayed by outward appearances; so, recalling the expression of my wife's face when I said that we would try kerosene, I thought it wisest to invest in something a little out of the common style.

I could not help reflecting as I closed my portemonnaie that the cost of the lamps would have settled the next gas bill, but consoled myself by remembering that lamps did not have to be bought every day; of course there must be an outlay at first; didn't I have to pay for that new chandelier in the parlor? So I cheerfully ordered the lamps and a can of oil to be sent to my office, as I wished to see my wife's look of pleasure when I unpacked those lamps, and intended to carry them home myself.

I had a long and vexatious day, and it was dark when I reached home. The house looked strange to me—not so cheerful as usual, I thought, as I felt for my latchkey. Could Mary or one of the children be sick?

Opening the door, I found the hall in utter darkness, and in trying to grope my way to the parlor struck violently against the banisters.

"Take care, Charles," called my wife

from the parlor. "I am afraid you cannot see."

It appeared to me highly probable that I could not, but I merely inquired why the house was so dark.

"You forget that you have had the gas cut off," answered Mrs. Manly. "I tried to persuade the man to leave the meter, but he said he had his orders from the gas company, so I supposed you must have been to them, and told them to take it away."

I am naturally good-tempered, but I must confess that it was not a blessing that I invoked on the head of that rascally clerk. However, there was no use in standing there in the dark. I could not at that hour go to the gas office, explains matters and have the meter replaced, so I presently remarked to my wife that I had lamps and oil with me, and we could speedily light up.

"Are the lamps trimmed?" asked my wife.

"Trimmed?" I repeated, not exactly comprehending her question.

"Yes, the oil and wicks put into them, I mean," she replied.

"Why, no," I responded, with a vague sense of something wrong; "but Bridget can do that in a few moments, can't she?"

"She could, if she could see," was the answer; "but not in the dark. Don't you think you had better step out and get some candles?"

I had nothing to say to that, so I "stepped," and it was rather a long step, too, for a tired man, as we live several blocks from any store. I could not help fancying that Mrs. Manly might have sent out for candles before dark, had she not wished to give me the full benefit of my experiment with kerosene. However, I got them, and returned. Lighting one, my wife managed to find a bottle to put it in, while I proceeded to unpack the basket, and with some triumph see the two lamps on the table, looking up at the same time for my wife's approval. Her gaze wandered from the table to the empty basket.

"Only two!" she exclaimed. "Why, Mr. Manly, if one is put in the hall, as I am sure you have found will be necessary, and one in the parlor, what are we to do for the dining-room, kitchen or bedrooms?"

"You forget, my dear," I returned, mildly, "that I have told you I had no idea that the gas meter was to be taken away,

and merely meant to try these in one room at first."

The lamps were duly filled and lighted, but one on our dining-table made so little impression on the gloom and darkness, that my eldest son facetiously observed he could not see the way to his mouth; and on my reproving him for such a speech, he left the room, and presently the house, in sullen silence.

The younger children, cowed by the rebuke to their brother, sat whispering together after supper, in one corner of the parlor, and on my asking why they did not commence some game as usual, looked at one another without speaking, till finally the youngest, our little Alice, lisped out, "We can't see to play, papa; only Willie says it would be nice to have a game of blindman's buff, because we shouldn't have to be blinded." Thereupon the rest burst into a laugh, which was hushed by my ordering them all off to bed, and I was left in undisturbed possession of the parlor.

Somehow, I could not settle down to read as usual. I feared that I had been unnecessarily harsh, and besides, I could not see. I looked at the lamp. It looked bright enough, but there seemed to be no light in the room except in a small circle close to it. Never mind! I would get more lamps the next day. Why, as Jenkins said, one might have half a dozen lamps burning, and yet not pay half what you did for gas.

Meanwhile, where was that new piece of music that I had bought for my wife? She was an excellent performer on the piano, and I often accompanied her on the violin. When she reentered the parlor, a few minutes later, I had the music on the rack, the lamp on the piano, and my violin in hand. She smiled and took her seat at the instrument, struck the opening chords, and we started off. Presently she struck a false note, corrected herself, went on, struck another, corrected herself again, and again stumbled. I was astonished, for she is a rapid reader, and plays very correctly.

"What is the matter?" I inquired.

"I am not quite used to the change in the position of the light," she replied. "It seems to blind me, instead of shining on the notes."

"I'll change it to this side," I said, suiting the action to the word, and moving the light to my side of the piano. For a few moments that did better—for my wife! I

couldn't see just right, but didn't mention it—only endeavored to alter my position.

Presently I extended my bow to point out a favorite passage, when it unluckily struck against the lamp, tipping it over, and breaking shade and chimney. The lamp itself my wife dexterously caught before it reached the floor or was broken. Of course that lamp could not be used again that night, as I had not provided any extra chimneys, but we were thankful at having escaped so easily, and retired in peace and—darkness!

Next morning Mrs. Manly suggested that I had better have the meter replaced, but I declined. I said that I certainly should not have had it taken away until we had tried the kerosene gradually, but as it was gone, I preferred now to test the oil thoroughly, that our worst mishaps were over, and I would get a good supply of lamps that very morning.

I did so—I sent home lamps, oil, chimneys, shades and wicks—everything that I could think of that might be needed, and when I went home at night I found a decided improvement over the previous evening, though I still fancied there was very little light in the rooms. However, that might be a notion of mine, and I prudently kept it to myself.

As I hung my coat on the rack in the hall, I noticed a very unpleasant greasy odor.

"What have you for supper, my dear?" I asked. "I cannot say that I relish the smell."

"O, that is from the lamps," replied my wife. "See how they smoke against the sides of the chimneys."

"That is all owing to the wick not being cut smoothly," I returned. "The man where I bought them assured me that there would be neither smoke nor smell if they were properly trimmed."

Mrs. Manly made no answer, but when night after night the same greasy odor pervaded the house, and the chimneys were blackened by smoke, and I again suggested that the fault was in the trimming, she quietly offered me a pair of scissors, and advised me to trim the wicks myself, adding that she had taken the whole care of the lamps, fearing that Bridget would neglect them. I declined the scissors, and ceased to complain of the smell, for I knew that no one could be more careful and exact

than my wife, and if she could not do better, certainly I could not.

I not unnaturally began to have a strong dislike to kerosene. Half of my best books had a grease spot on the binding, and the marble top of the parlor table had various dark marks upon it, showing the exact size of the stands of the various lamps that had been placed there.

It was an undeniable fact that our evenings were much less pleasant than formerly. The children sat moping about, my eldest boy was generally away, and if my wife and I tried to play some of our favorite pieces, we generally made so many blunders that we gave up in disgust.

I sat one day in my office, thinking of all these things, and thinking also of what Jenkins had said when he met me that morning. He had congratulated me on "asserting my independence," "cutting loose from an infamous swindle," etc., etc., all of which sounded well, but somehow I had doubts of the good sense of it. After I left him I had met one of the members of the gas company, and told him the trick his clerk had played upon me. He was justly indignant, vowed to make him understand his business better for the future, adding that no clerk had any right to send and take away a meter in that informal manner, and offered to have it replaced at once. This proposal I did not accept.

"I have started the experiment, and I will carry it through," I said, as I bade him good-morning, though I was sorely tempted to agree to his proposition.

"I will try it faithfully for another month," I told myself, "and if I can learn to like kerosene, I will. Perhaps as we grow used to it we shall begin to discover its good qualities."

Vain hope! Not a week later I arrived at home one evening to find a scene of wild confusion. My wife had been bringing those two large and handsome lamps which I have spoken of into the parlor. Fortunately they were not lighted. As she entered the room her foot caught in a rug,

and she fell, while the lamps were dashed half across the room. One hit the piano violently, making a deep and unsightly bruise on the highly polished wood. The lamp was shattered to atoms, and the oil covered that part of the carpet; while the other lamp had struck the window, breaking both itself and the glass, and throwing its oil over the damask curtains.

My poor wife had gathered herself up, and stood tearfully surveying the ruin she had so innocently wrought.

"O Charles," she sobbed as I entered, "only look! See what I have done!"

My heart sank at the thought of that new carpet, but I never could stand my wife's tears, so—I hope my voice sounded as I meant it should when I said:

"Never mind, dear; accidents will happen; and what a mercy it is that you are not hurt, and the lamps were not lighted."

That night I did a little sum in addition—lamps, spoiled carpet, books and furniture—and the next morning I called on the gas company to replace my meter.

Need I say that I shall henceforth pay my gas bills in silent thankfulness, or that I have since discovered that Jenkins was deeply engaged in oil speculations?

BEAUTY.—The standard of beauty differs essentially in different races. The Chinese admire black teeth and eyelids. On the shores of the Mediterranean great corpulency is preferred. "Hair like wheat," the "honey-colored hair" of Homer, is the most affected of late among us. "Brown in shadow, gold in sun," is a beautiful shade, but Elizabeth's bright red hair, "capelli d'or," as she called it, was inspiration to sycophant pens in her time, and even lovely Mary of Scots sacrificed her beautiful dark locks to the "red fronts." Lady Macbeth, and the much maligned beautiful and noble Lucretia Borgia had hair light and golden. The most beautiful women are not the happiest ones; yet a lovely face is an excellent card of recommendation all over the world.

MR. SULLIVAN'S NEW FURNITURE.

BY ANNA MORRIS.

It was a very cosy-looking little room, and a very pretty little woman who stood peeping anxiously out of the window into the fast darkening street, that snowy New Year's Eve.

"I wonder Edward does not come," she said, half aloud. "It is growing so dark and snowy! How tired and cold he will be!" And she stirred the already glowing fire in the grate, rearranged the dressing-gown and slippers that had been warming for a full hour, and drew the easy-chair closer to the hearth.

"There, that looks comfortable!" she exclaimed with a smile of satisfaction as she surveyed the room. "It looks like old times, too!" she continued. "This is just as I used to have the room when Edward first came to see me at home, only then," with a little laugh and blush, "I didn't have his dressing-gown and slippers ready for him."

"I am so glad that I had mother's furniture," she went on, leaning against the mantel, and looking lovingly around at the familiar articles. "No other, if it had been ever so grand and beautiful, could have seemed so much like home, or had so many pleasant associations. But here comes Edward!" And she sprang joyfully to open the door, the little shadow of sorrow which the memory of her childhood's home had spread over her face dispelled in a moment.

"So, little woman! Waiting and watching as usual?" was the cheery salutation, as Edward Sullivan bent to return his wife's caress. "I am rather late to-night, it's a fact, but no horrible hobgoblin has caught me, as I dare say you have been fancying. Now for some supper, and then I'll tell you what detained me," he added, as he threw off his overcoat, and shook the snow from his fur cap.

"Very well," was the smiling reply, "supper is all ready;" and Mrs. Sullivan led the way to the pleasant dining-room.

Half an hour later, as Mr. Sullivan donned his dressing-gown, and seated himself in the waiting armchair, he said:

"Now, Etta, for the explanation of my tardiness this evening. You remember

when we were out walking last week, how much we admired that furniture in Stratton's window?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Sullivan, rather hesitatingly. She remembered how much Edward had admired it, and that she had agreed that it was certainly very handsome, but added that she thought it too showy for good taste.

"Well," continued her husband, not noticing her tone. "I have thought for some time past that this furniture," looking about with a slightly contemptuous air, "was hardly the thing. It did very well in the country, but here things must be different. So I stopped to-night and ordered that set for a New Year's gift for you, and they agreed to send it up right away. Yes, here they come now!" as the sound of a cart stopping in front of the house fell on his ear. "You can send these things back with their carman, to be sold in their auction rooms, or store them in the attic as you choose." And he left the parlor in answer to a loud ring at the bell, too quickly to see the troubled look on his wife's countenance.

"Can you lend me a hand, sir?" asked the carman. "We are so driven to-night, that no one could be spared to come with me."

"All right," answered Mr. Sullivan. "I'll get my coat, and be with you in a moment."

Dashing into the parlor again, he pulled off his dressing-gown, and tossing it on the sofa, said as he hastily drew on his coat:

"Let Jane come up, and be putting these things out of the way, Etta, while we are bringing in the others, and then I will have the carman help me carry the sofa up stairs, unless you prefer to send them by him to the auction room."

"O, if you please, Edward," said his wife quietly, but with a little tremor in her voice, "I think we will have them moved up stairs."

"Very well," he answered carelessly, and ran out. A few moments more, and the little parlor had undergone quite a metamorphosis. In place of the substantial old-fashioned furniture, there stood a complete suite of those articles which are now popularly known as chairs and sofas, and which seem to be an ingenious combination of as

much show, and as little comfort, as possible.

Mr. Sullivan looked about him complacently, as he entered the parlor after dismissing the carman. "This is something like," he began, pushing a chair towards the fire. "I am thankful those wretched old things are out of sight. They have been a perfect eyesore to me. I never was so mortified, as when the Eltons called last week. They live in such good style themselves, that we must have seemed like barbarians to them."

"But come, little woman!" he continued, playfully drawing his wife down on his knee, "you haven't thanked me yet for your New Year's gift."

"I have hardly had an opportunity," replied Etta, "you have been so busy; but indeed, dear Edward, I do thank you for your kindness in thinking of my pleasure."

"But you look uncommonly grave, somehow," persisted Edward, making an endeavor to see the eyes so resolutely turned away from him.

"Perhaps I am afraid it was rather extravagant," was the half jesting reply, and Mr. Sullivan, readily accepting the excuse, rejoined, "O, that is all right! We don't buy a set of furniture every day."

Mrs. Sullivan's only response to this was to propose a song. Both husband and wife were fond of music, and passed many of their evening hours at the piano, but to-night something seemed unsatisfactory to Mr. Sullivan; he fidgeted about, changed the music, declared the piano out of tune, and finally exclaimed:

"I'll tell you what it is, Etta! We need a new piano. This one is worn out, and besides the case is so old-fashioned, that it does not at all correspond with the new furniture."

"We have always thought it sweet-toned," replied his wife, timidly, "though certainly it is not very stylish. I had it when I first took lessons."

No more was said, but the music, for that evening at least, was spoiled. The new furniture had begun its work.

Next morning as Mr. Sullivan was dressing he suddenly exclaimed, "Etta, do you know where I put my pocket-book?" and commenced a hurried search in the various pockets. His wife had not seen it, but joined in the search, which, however, proved fruitless. No trace of the missing book

could be found. It was rather a note-book than a porte-monnaie, but had contained a considerable sum of money, and some valuable papers, and Mr. Sullivan departed for his store in much anxiety; hoping that he might have left it in his desk, but fearing, as the event proved, that he had dropped it from his pocket.

This loss not only embarrassed him, but induced him to yield to what had always been a temptation to him—buying articles, when he had not money to pay for them. The money in the missing pocket-book he had placed there to pay for his furniture.

"No consequence at all," said the polite dealer, when Mr. Sullivan apologized for not settling the bill at once, as he had intended to do. "Very happy to wait your convenience. Cannot I show you something more, this morning? We have every description of furniture, carpets, curtains, etc."

"Not this morning, I believe," Edward answered, as he hurried towards his store, hoping to find his missing property, but doomed, as we have seen, to disappointment.

The man's words rang in his ears, however, and noticing after a day or two that the parlor carpet was quite put to shame by the showy furniture, he called at the furniture warehouse one morning, and selected a new one, which he ordered to be made, and sent home. Discovering after this was done, that the curtains now looked worn and shabby, they were speedily replaced by heavy draperies.

Next he became aware of the fact that his dining-room wore such a poverty-stricken appearance that he was ashamed to invite a friend to dine. This defect was at once removed, a handsome extension table, elegant chairs, and a rich carpet, gave the room quite a different appearance, and for a short time Mr. Sullivan rested satisfied.

He failed to notice the anxious look which was fast becoming habitual on his wife's face. At first, she had protested against each new addition, but finding that this served only to incite her husband to fresh extravagance, she redoubled her efforts to reduce the household expenses, hoping thereby to avert the catastrophe which she dreaded.

She had kept a nursery-maid to assist in the care of her baby boy, but she now found means to convince Edward that it was much better baby should be with her, and dismissing the nurse, devoted herself to the child.

Edward avoided all mention of his business affairs, but she felt convinced from his careworn looks that they were not flourishing. Still, his extravagant habits continued and even increased. Costly pictures and statuettes now began to please his fancy, and he purchased, Etta vainly hoping that each such indulgence would prove the last.

Thus a year slipped away, when Edward came home one night, evidently full of some important piece of news.

"Could you go out with me for half an hour, Etta?" he inquired, after tea was over.

Etta's face flushed, painfully. It was a long time since she had been out in the evening, not since the nursery-maid had left. Murmuring something of "seeing about it," she hastily left the room. Jane was trustworthy and fond of the child, and occasionally took care of him when Mrs. Sullivan was obliged to go out during the day, but she had never been asked to give up her evenings, and Etta scarcely knew how she would take the request. However, the girl assented readily, and somewhat relieved, her mistress donned hat and sack and sallied forth.

Mr. Sullivan chatted gayly as they walked on for a short distance, and suddenly pausing before a handsome mansion said, "Come in here, Etta, I want you to see this house, which I am thinking of taking. Ours is far too small and shabby."

Mrs. Sullivan felt as if she had received a sudden blow. Leave the little home which had grown so dear to her! However, she followed in silence, and hardly knew whether she was awake or dreaming during the tour of inspection through the house. An agent had been awaiting them, and ushered them now up stairs and now down, talking volubly of modern improvements, good drainage, aristocratic neighborhood, etc., etc., till Etta's head whirled.

She was thankful when they were once more at home. Baby had slept soundly during their absence, so Jane was amiable, and assured her mistress "it was no trouble at all, at all, to mind the swate little fellow."

"Now, Etta, tell me what you think of the house," inquired her husband, as she rejoined him in the parlor.

"I hardly know," was the hesitating reply, for poor little Etta had found that her husband was far more easily offended than formerly, and dreaded to vex him.

"Do you think it necessary for us to have such a large house?" she ventured, presently.

"You can't find a much smaller one in a decent neighborhood," was the answer, "and the smaller ones have not as many conveniences. That is a house in which you need not be ashamed to receive your friends."

"I should never be ashamed to receive them here," Mrs. Sullivan responded, quietly.

"Well, I am," retorted Edward, impatiently. "All the folks I know have moved further up town, and I want to do the same."

"But do you think you can afford the extra expense?" urged his wife. "The rent must be much higher than we now pay."

"I am not going to rent it, Etta, but buy it," returned her husband, still more impatiently; "and as to my affording it, I presume I understand my own business best."

Etta's lip quivered, but she remained silent. Edward resumed his newspaper, and she presently left the room unobserved, and stole up stairs to see if little Robert still slept peacefully. He had not moved since she left him, and she sat down near his crib to think matters over quietly, before holding any further conversation with her husband on the subject.

"I am convinced that he is troubled about money," she said to herself, "for duns have come very frequently lately, and the other night, those two men came, and talked and swore dreadfully. I don't know what it was all about, and Edward only told me not to bother when I asked, but I am sure we ought not to take a more expensive house. Then he would want more company, and I should be obliged to keep another servant. O, it will never do! I must tell him so, even if he does not like it;" and the poor little woman arose and went resolutely towards the door.

Just then there was a peal at the bell. Etta leaned over the bannisters with a sudden presentiment of evil. She heard Edward come out of the parlor, and go to the door. Some words were spoken that she could not distinguish, then Edward's voice clear and sharp rang out, "Arrest! What for?"

Again the visitor's words were unintelligible, but her husband, after a moment's pause, said, "Well, come in, and let me

understand it all," and the two entered the parlor and closed the door.

Etta felt as if chained to the spot. What could it all mean? She must have been mistaken, and yet she had surely heard those words. It seemed to her ages before her husband opened the parlor door and called her name.

How she got down stairs she could not have told. Edward stood in the hall, very pale, but he spoke calmly:

"Etta, there is some trouble in my business, and I have been arrested. I must go now. Do not worry. It will all come out right in the morning, no doubt. Go as early as you can to Mr. Gaston, and ask him to see me, that we may make arrangements for my release. And now good-by, little woman, and keep up a brave heart."

The stranger came out of the parlor at this moment, and almost before Etta could realize what her husband had said, the two had gone, leaving her alone with her great sorrow.

All through that dreary night she sat by her boy's crib, vainly endeavoring to comprehend what it could all mean. As early as she dared in the morning she was on her way to Mr. Gaston, once more leaving little Robert with the faithful Jane, whose curiosity she had quieted by telling her that Mr. Sullivan had been suddenly called away on business.

Mr. Gaston was at breakfast, but on hearing who his early visitor was, desired that she should be shown at once into the breakfast-room. He was an elderly gentleman, and a valued friend, as well as a legal adviser of Edward.

"I have been afraid of trouble," he said, shaking his head, after listening to Etta's story. "I warned Edward that he was growing reckless. But make yourself as easy as you can, and I will call upon you as soon as I have seen your husband, and I dare say we shall find our way out of this scrape before many hours."

So saying the old gentleman shook hands cordially with Mrs. Sullivan, as he escorted her to the door, and making the necessary preparations, started on a visit to his unfortunate client.

A little later in the day he presented himself in Etta's parlor.

"Well," he said, cheerily, as she came in, looking sad and worn, "I find that Edward has been arrested at the suit of Strat-

ton, the furniture dealer. There has been all sorts of bother about the bill for some weeks, it seems. Edward could not raise money to meet it. He tried to patch the matter up, and perhaps might have succeeded, in getting more time, had not Stratton heard that he had been looking at a stylish house, with a view to purchasing it, and thinking from that circumstance that Edward must have some money on hand, resolved to bring matters to a crisis."

"But," said poor Etta, looking utterly bewildered, "I did not know we owed Mr. Stratton. I thought this was all paid for." And she looked with an air of loathing upon the showy furniture and gaudy carpet that had wrought so much sorrow.

"I know you did," answered Mr. Gaston, kindly. "Edward has told me all about it; how you begged him not to buy the articles, and how he lost his note-book, which prevented his paying the first bill, and then it was so easy to order more, and have the bill run on. "But now," continued the old lawyer, "the question is, what shall be done? I must go to Stratton and see what terms I can make."

"O Mr. Gaston," cried Etta, earnestly, "could you not induce him to take back the furniture at a reduction? You know he keeps second-hand furniture as well as new, though for that matter this has not been injured, and with a little polishing he would doubtless sell it again as new. I have all the articles we formerly used stored away carefully, and I feel sure Edward would be willing these should go. I am sure I should be thankful."

"You are a wise little woman," said Mr. Gaston, admiringly. "I will see what can be done."

Left alone, Etta wandered up stairs to the room where her mother's furniture had been stored.

"I am sure Mr. Gaston will make Mr. Stratton take back the things," she thought, hopefully, "and I must see if everything is ready to be moved."

She pushed the chairs and tables back and forth, dusting them carefully, and setting them so that they could most readily be carried down stairs. Then she proceeded to the sofa. It was large and heavy—almost double the size of the modern affair in the parlor.

"I always liked this old sofa," she said, aloud, as she busily pried her feather and

duster. "Many an hour have I sat curled up at this end, with my book in my lap, and my pocket full of apples; and then when Edward used to come to our house, it was always our favorite seat." Here a feather broke off of the duster, and slipped down between the back and the seat. Etta put her fingers down to catch it, when they came in contact with some hard substance.

"What is that?" she thought. "I hope the springs are not out of place." Thrusting her hand down further, she clasped something and drew it up.

"Edward's pocket-book!" she exclaimed, in astonishment. "How could it have got here?"

Suddenly it flashed across her mind how on the evening the new furniture came home he had thrown his dressing-gown on the sofa when he put on his coat to go to the assistance of the carman. Doubtless he had previously placed his note-book in the pocket of the dressing-gown, and in tossing it down, it had been shaken out, and slipped into its hiding-place. Of course all their search had been in vain, as the old sofa had been moved into the spare room, and no one thought of exploring its recesses for the missing treasure.

While Etta still stood with the pocket-book in her hand, she heard the doorbell ring, and rightly conjecturing that it was Mr. Gaston, ran hastily down stairs to admit him.

"It is all right, my dear Mrs. Sullivan," he said, in answer to her inquiring looks. "Stratton has consented to take back all—carpets, curtains and furniture. To be sure, he demanded a large discount, but I have driven as sharp a bargain as I could, and will try to raise the necessary amount to meet the balance."

"Perhaps this will help you," said Etta, placing the pocket-book in his hands.

"What is this? I do not understand," began Mr. Gaston.

"It is Edward's lost pocket-book," she interrupted, and poured forth the whole story of her finding it, while Mr. Gaston hastily unclasped it and examined the contents.

"Five hundred dollars!" he exclaimed. "I should think it *would* help! Why, we can square up that account, and leave you a nice little balance towards some others, which I dare say are troubling you. And here," he continued, "are the receipts Ed-

ward told me he had lost, and for want of which he has had to pay some bills the second time. I think I will take charge of these, and frighten those folks into refunding.

"And now, Mrs. Sullivan, the wagons will come for these things in a few minutes. I ventured to tell them to come at once, because I cannot obtain Edward's release until Stratton has his property again."

"O yes," cried Etta, eagerly, "the sooner the better. I will send Jane for a woman who sometimes helps us, and we will soon have the old furniture in its place."

There are always vexatious delays in law matters, so Mr. Sullivan did not reach home till about his usual hour for returning at night. Mr. Gaston had merely told him that he had arranged his affairs, promising to drop in late in the evening and give him full particulars.

He was, therefore, totally unprepared for any change in the appearance of his home. Etta met him at the door as usual, and after the first joyful greeting, stood aside, a little timidly, to let him enter the parlor first.

"Why!" was his astonished exclamation. "What does all this mean?"

"I hope you won't feel very badly, Edward," began his wife, when he stopped her by saying:

"Feel badly! Why, I am thankful to have those hateful things out of my sight! How nice the room looks! and I declare," seating himself in the old easy-chair, "this is worth more than all those new-fangled affairs for comfort. I haven't felt so much at home for a year. Yes, just a year, isn't it? It was the night before New Year's, just as this is, that all our troubles began."

"And now they are all ended," added his wife, as she handed him his dressing-gown with a smile. "Suppose you put this on before we go down to supper, as you must be tired."

"All right," he responded; and slipping on the comfortable garment, took his pocket-book from his coat, intending to put it in the pocket of his dressing-gown, but something seemed to obstruct its entrance.

"What is in here?" Putting in his hand as he spoke, he drew forth another pocket-book.

"My old pocket-book, by all that is wonderful!" he exclaimed. "Where did this come from, Etta?"

"Come down to supper and I'll explain," she answered, smilingly; but the explanation took so long that Mr. Gaston, on his arrival, found them still at the table. He also had a story to tell, of how he had seen the parties who had forced Edward to pay their bills the second time, and by quietly suggesting the probable consequences should their conduct become publicly known, had induced them to refund the money, which he now handed to Etta, with a smile, saying:

"There, Mrs. Sullivan, I move that you should be appointed treasurer."

"And I second the motion," added Edward, laughingly. "I am going to turn over a new leaf for the coming year, Mr. Gaston, and promise you that in future Etta shall know all my affairs, and I will be guided by her judgment."

"Then in return," retorted Mr. Gaston, "I will promise that you will never spend another night where you spent your last."

MRS. SPARHAWK'S BOARDER.

BY ELIZABETH BIGELOW.

If her boarder had come to her in any ordinary way—come, as so many artists did come every summer, with big portfolios under their arms, and picturesque, “bragandish” hats upon their heads, saying that the hotel accommodations were so miserable, and the charms of her homestead so great, that they would be willing to pay anything for the enjoyment of her hospitality—Mrs. Sparhawk would never have taken him in.

She “wasn’t obleeged to take boarders, thank fortin!” she was in the habit of saying. The fact was the wheel of fortune in its revolutions had suddenly and unexpectedly brought the Sparhawks uppermost. “Pa,” who was also “Deacon” Sparhawk, had taken the scanty earnings which, by dint of rigid economy, he had laid up from the product of his sterile little farm, and invested it in speculation, and, greatly to his own astonishment, as well as that of other people, made a fortune—that is, what he and all Mapleville considered a fortune; and “Mis’ Deacon Sparhawk,” as her neighbors called her, was happy in the gratification of the ambition that had rankled in her bosom ever since she was Polly Stubbs, and “worked out” at Farmer Appleton’s.

No boarders for her! It was all that she and “Lupiry” could do to “cook up for the deacon and Kitty, who was dretful dainty; and as for her spare chamber, could she be expected to give that up to boarders, when every divinity student that came to Mapleville to preach was sent to the deacon’s to spend Sunday?” No, indeed! they might besiege the house, and flatter the deacon, until they were tired, no summer boarders should ever cross her threshold. That was what Mrs. Sparhawk was always saying, and she was a woman of her word, too.

But still a summer boarder did cross her threshold, and abide under her roof the summer through, and he neither “besieged the house nor flattered the deacon.”

He made his entrance in the most unexpected manner. Three minutes before he crossed her threshold, Mrs. Sparhawk, look-

ing out of her window, saw Snowdrop, the white cow, who had escaped from the pasture, walking leisurely along the highway, and from the opposite direction there was approaching a buggy containing a gentleman, who, Mrs. Sparhawk was sure by the cut of his clothes, was not a native of Mapleville. The horse he was driving objected to a white cow; whether he was a believer in the supernatural, and looked upon Snowdrop as a ghost, or whatever the cause may have been, he was seized with sudden terror.

There was a crash as the buggy and the stone wall came together. Then the young man was lying unconscious beside the wall, with the blood trickling down his face; the horse, with the remnants of the buggy attached to him, had leaped the stone wall, and was careering madly across the field; while Snowdrop looked after him with mild astonishment in her hazel eyes.

The deacon and one of his hired men, who were down in the field, rushed to the rescue, and carried the injured and still insensible stranger and laid him on Mrs. Sparhawk’s spare bed.

Dr. Haskell, the old doctor, whom all Mapleville regarded as infallible, was sent for in haste; and in the mean time Mrs. Sparhawk, who had the reputation among her neighbors of being “dretful handy in sickness,” did the best she could to restore to consciousness the injured wayfarer thus providentially thrown upon her care.

Lupiry, the maid-of-all-work, rushed to communicate the news to Kitty, “sole daughter of the (Sparhawk) house and heart,” who sat in the summer-house, in a white *pique* dress, reading the third volume of a highly flavored novel, which she had brought home from boarding-school.

“The beautifullest young man you ever see, as white as a corp—a corp, in fact, and lost his senses entirely, with blood a streamin’ from every pore, and a diamon’ pin in his shirt bosom, and dressed up to kill!”—

“Lupiry, what are you talking about?” demanded Kitty, as the damsel paused for breath.

"Flat on his back on the spare-room bed, with camphire to his nose, and your ma bringin' him to, and the whitest hands you ever see, and a mustache that would break your heart, and him a corp—and the blood a streamin' all over the spare-room bed-spread and carpet, and Rufus gone for Dr. Haskell, and the horse run away, and they can't catch him, and the buggy smashed all into flinders, and your pa ravin' crazy, but your ma as calm as a statoo, a bringin' him to with a bottle of camphire!"

"Lupiry, will you be calm for a moment and tell me what is the matter?" said Kitty, with great dignity. "Is Rufus killed or hurt?"

"Rufus? Sakes alive! nothing could kill that boy—he was born to be hung, if ever a boy was! It's a beautiful young man that is killed; haven't I been telling you so just as fast as I could speak? You jest come and see him before he comes to hisself, and you'll say he's jest as handsome as a picter!"

Here was something better than the three-volumed novel.

Sensations were not common in Mapleville. The greatest excitement there were the minister's donation party and the Fourth-of-July picnic.

Kitty could not make out much about this affair, Lupiry's excitement was so great, but it was certain that there was a handsome young man connected with it, and Kitty thought that sounded promising.

She dropped her book upon the floor of the arbor and hurried into the house.

Lupiry was right about the "camphire," certainly; the whole house was filled with the odor.

Kitty went up-stairs, and opened the spare-room door softly and hesitatingly. Lupiry's description of the scene within was terrifying, but Kitty possessed her full share of her grandmother Eve's failing.

There was a handsome young man lying on the bed, with a face of marble-like whiteness, and her mother and Mrs. Jones, their next-door neighbor, were bending over him with anxious faces. There was a cut across his forehead, and a dark purple spot at one of his temples.

"I am afraid he's gone!" said Mrs. Jones, solemnly.

Kitty's eyes filled with tears as she looked down upon him. He opened his eyes suddenly—large, dark eyes, with a far-away, bewildered look in them.

"Am I in heaven? Are you an angel?" he murmured.

Kitty drew back, blushing crimson.

"La sakes! It's only our Kitty!" said Mrs. Sparhawk. "I'm glad you're better, but I wouldn't try to talk much if I was you. Jest shet your eyes, and keep quiet!"

Mrs. Sparhawk, with all her anxiety for her charge, was not without a thrill of motherly pride that her Kitty should have been taken for an angel, and she didn't wonder at it, either; with her beautiful complexion, and her golden hair, she thought Kitty did look like an angel, especially when she had a white dress on; and she inwardly resolved never to scold again because of the number of white dresses that Kitty had in the wash.

But Mrs. Jones, who did not approve of Kitty Sparhawk's going to boarding-school, and dressing out of a fashion book every day, sniffed contemptuously.

"I'm afraid the young man's ideas of heaven a'n't very scriptural!" she remarked.

Dr. Haskell made his appearance just then, and hustled everybody but Mrs. Sparhawk out of the room.

Kitty sat on the front stairs, in an agony of apprehension. She expected that Dr. Haskell would say that he could not live. Perhaps even now he was dead!

But when at last the old doctor came out of the chamber, he beamed cheerfully upon her.

"He is pretty badly hurt, but we shall pull him through, my dear, we shall pull him through! He needs the best of nursing, and he'll get that here. Couldn't have fallen into better hands—though it is a pity he couldn't have left out the stone wall when he fell!" And the doctor, who could not refrain from joking, even at a funeral, went off rubbing his hands complacently, as if he had made the best joke imaginable.

Kitty felt wonderfully cheered. It would have been so dreadful for him to die there, away from all his friends! Who were his friends? Kitty wondered. "Had he a father? had he a mother?" Had he—oh! had he?—a wife, or a sweetheart? It was very probable that he had, Kitty decided, but she found that she did not like that view of the case at all. She was still sitting there, upon the front stairs, meditating upon the interesting occupant of the spare chamber, when Ben Appleton came strolling up the garden path.

Ben Appleton had a way of strolling up Deacon Sparhawk's garden path very often. All Mapleville supposed him to be Kitty's lover, and decided that it was a very suitable match, since they had both been sent away from home, Ben to college, and Kitty to boarding-school, and had got their heads full of new-fangled notions, so that nobody else in Mapleville was good enough for either of them. Mrs. Sparhawk supposed Ben to be Kitty's lover, and thought that it was a very suitable match, because the Appletons were the first family of Mapleville—even Mapleville had a first family—and Farmer Appleton was rich, and Ben was "smart"—going to be a wonderful doctor, they said: she *had* thought it would be a fine thing for Kitty to marry one of the divinity students who "supplied" at Mapleville, but Kitty didn't seem to take kindly to the idea of being a minister's wife; and she wasn't sure herself that she wanted "a son-in-law that she should be afraid of, as she should of a minister."

Kitty, for her part, had good reason to suppose that Ben was her lover, but what she *didn't* suppose was that she was in love with him!

She liked Ben well enough—very well, when he wouldn't persist in making love to her; and he was handsome, too; at least all the girls thought so when he came to see her at school; they fairly raved over him; and Kitty began to think he was more desirable as a lover than she ever had done before. But the great trouble was she had known Ben all her life; there was nothing in the least romantic about their acquaintance; they had coasted and played tag together, and she remembered just how green he looked in his first long coat!

And then, worst of all, nobody objected! If there had been a "stern parient" to lock one or both of them up on bread and water, there would have been some fun in it! If she could have eloped to some Gretna Green with Ben, pursued by a dozen irate relatives, with loaded pistols in their hands, Ben would not have seemed so undesirable a husband! But, as it was, there was nothing about the affair that at all resembled the love episodes in the novels from which she drew her ideas of life. She was not going to be wooed and married in any such tame and commonplace way as that—not she! Ben was so provokingly cool, too!—though she couldn't help believing him

when he said he loved her, for Ben could be depended upon to mean every word that he said; but he wouldn't get down on his knees to her; he did not even suggest the possibility of his blowing his brains out because she wouldn't have him!

He looked as happy and confident as a successful lover might have looked, as he came up the garden path, carelessly switching the tiger lilies with his cane, and whistling cheerily.

"Ben, be quiet! You mustn't make such a noise!" said Kitty, in a stage whisper.

"Why, what is the matter?" inquired Ben.

"O Ben! haven't you heard? Such a dreadful accident! And we have got him here—up on the spare-room bed!" said Kitty, not much more coherent than Lupiry, in her eagerness to impart the startling information.

"Him? Who?" asked Ben, looking as if he thought she had lost her senses.

"A young man who was thrown out of a carriage right in front of the house. His buggy was broken all to pieces, and he was almost killed!—and, O Ben! he is so handsome! the very handsomest man I ever saw!"

Ben looked as disgusted as a young man invariably looks when his sweetheart tells him how handsome another young man is.

Kitty read his face easily, and, exulting in her power to tease him, she expatiated on the interesting appearance of the stranger at great length, and at last managed to quarrel with Ben, and send him sulkily homeward, resolving not to be the sport of such a little flirt as Kitty Sparhawk any longer.

The injured stranger recovered his consciousness fully that night, and seemed to remember all that had happened to him; but he was enjoined not to talk, so Kitty's curiosity in regard to him was not gratified. But the next day two friends of his, who said they were staying for a time at Norwalk, the adjoining town, came to see him, having just learned of the accident that had befallen him, and from them Kitty learned his name; it was Fortescue—Walter H. Fortescue. That was quite fine-sounding, Kitty thought; though he looked as if he had a more delightfully romantic name than that.

That was all they learned about him for some time. Even after he grew well enough

to converse freely, he was very reticent with regard to himself.

Mrs. Sparhawk was a Good Samaritan, as Dr. Haskell called her. She devoted herself to her patient day and night, until he was convalescent, and then, utterly worn out, she left him to Kitty's care. And Kitty read to him—not her novels, but volumes of poetry which he sent to the city for—and sung to him and talked to him. And he, in return, made love to her. And though his illness was very long, to Kitty time flew on golden wings.

Mrs. Jones came in occasionally, and inquired, with many contemptuous sniffs, if Kitty and the young stranger were not getting "considerable good friends;" and Mrs. Sparhawk would reply that Kitty pitied him, and tried to amuse him, that was all. "Didn't Mrs. Jones know that Kitty was as good as engaged to Ben Appleton?"

And poor, short-sighted Mrs. Sparhawk had no more doubts or fears than she expressed.

But Deacon Sparhawk had a more prudent mind. He wore a troubled countenance one day as he took the letter which had come to the post-office for their boarder out of his pocket.

"Look at that, Polly, and see what you think of it!" he said.

And "Polly" took it, and read the superscription—"W. H. Fortescue, Manager Fortescue's Variety Troupe."

"Sakes alive! what is a variety troupe?" said Mrs. Sparhawk.

"Well, that is just what I didn't know, and so I inquired down at the post-office, and they say it is a play-acting company, Polly!" And the good deacon's voice took an accent of horror at the last words.

"Play-acting!" repeated Mrs. Sparhawk, with no less horror.

"And they do say that Fortescue is an actor himself, as well as overseer of the whole of them, and they were going to have a play over in Norwalk the night he got hurt here!"

"A play-actor!—and such a likely appearin' young man as that!" repeated poor Mrs. Sparhawk, whose ideas of actors were chiefly derived from Sunday-school books of the old-fashioned, orthodox type, where they are represented as direct agents of the Gentleman in Black.

"I'm afraid we had better have sent him to the hotel, Polly!" said the deacon.

"I couldn't have done it, Silas! No, not if I had known jest what he was, I couldn't have sent a poor, mangled, sufferin' fellow-creature there, where they make saleratus bread, and have what I don't like to mention in their beds! And, let him be what he will, he 'a'n't done us no harm!"

"I don't know about that, Polly," said the deacon, dolefully. "I have had a notion lately that our Kitty was getting to like him pretty well!"

"Fiddlesticks! That's jest like a man! They think the sex is so fascernatin' that a girl can't have one of 'em round without fallin' in love with him! My Kitty would never think of such a thing! She and Ben Appleton have grown up together, and she would never give a thought to any other man!"

The deacon was too wise a man to argue with his wife, but he held to his own opinion notwithstanding.

"But we mustn't have him here any longer, Polly, now that he is well enough to go," pursued the deacon.

"No, we mustn't," assented Mrs. Polly. "It don't look well for a deacon of the church to be harborin' a play-actor!"

By a singular chance it happened that while the deacon and his wife were holding this conversation, out in the summer-house, Mr. Fortescue was revealing to Kitty the facts with which they had become acquainted.

"Why, oh! why didn't you tell me before that you were an actor?" cried Kitty, with clasped hands and an expression of mingled horror and delight.

"Because I supposed you would be shocked, you dear little Puritan! How could I dare to tell a deacon's daughter whom I loved that I was an actor, until I was sure that she loved me? Do you think it is so very dreadful?"

"I? Oh, I think it is delightful! How I should like to see you act! But what will they say?—oh! what will father and mother say?"

"Call me an ungrateful wretch, and hustle me out of their house, and forbid your ever seeing me again, I suppose," said Mr. Fortescue, watching her shadowed face keenly. "But then there isn't any particular need of their knowing, is there? It's of no use, Kitty! You know as well as I do that they will never give you to me if I ask them openly. But if you will marry

me-without their consent, they'll be sure to forgive you!"

"Yes, I suppose they would; but it seems very mean and wicked to deceive them!" said Kitty. Some way the prospect of an elopement didn't seem so delightful to her when she came to think of it as a reality.

"You seem to think a good deal more of them than you do of me! It would be very easy to part from me forever, I suppose."

Kitty's eyes filled with tears, and she hid her face on his shoulder. Mr. Walter Fortescue had no further doubts of his success. He had a plan for their marriage already formed, and he secured Kitty's consent to it that afternoon. He was to leave there the next day; he was able to go now, and his business engagements would not allow him to delay any longer, he said. In a week from that night Kitty was to steal away from home unobserved, and meet him in Norwalk, and from thence they were to go to New York, where they were to be married.

He announced his intention of leaving at the tea-table, and the deacon and his wife exchanged congratulatory glances. They did not want to "hurt his feelings" by requesting him to leave, even though he was a play-actor; now he need not know that they knew it.

"Better not say anything to Kitty about it, either, Polly," said the deacon, when they were in private. It might make her think actors wa'n't so bad as they are!"

Mr. Fortescue thought the deacon and his wife were a little stiff and cold in their leave-takings, but did not think they suspected him of anything worse than making love to Kitty. After he had got away he noticed the superscription on his letter which had so effectually enlightened his worthy hosts.

"But it won't make any difference; they will forgive Kitty anything, if I can once get her!" he thought.

In the mean time Ben Appleton had kept his resolutions not to be made sport of any longer by Kitty pretty well, but he had determined to "be a brother to her, and take care of her, at any rate!" And he had seen how things were going on, and made inquiries in regard to Mr. Walter Fortescue.

Not without misgivings and tears, Kitty packed her little travelling-bag, stole out unobserved, and took her way to the railroad station, as the six-o'clock train for

Norwalk was due. As she passed the post-office, the postmaster's little daughter ran out to bring her a letter. She put it in her pocket without opening it, and hurried along.

Nobody was likely to think it at all strange that she should be going to Norwalk, for she had an aunt there, and often went there alone, but she felt guilty and frightened, and thought everybody was watching her.

She curled herself up in an obscure corner of the car, and when it had fairly started on its way she opened her letter. The superscription reminded her of Ben Appleton's writing, yet it wasn't exactly like his. But the inside was very different.

It was in Mr. Fortescue's handwriting, she was sure of that, because he wrote a very peculiar hand, and had often written her name in books. It was a letter addressed to "Dear Bill," and ran in this way: "I am going to marry the deacon's daughter, and if you will help me by keeping some people who might be troublesome out of the way, I will remember you when I get hold of the deacon's snug little pile! She is an only daughter, and the old folks will be blessing us in a day or two. Of course the girl will be an encumbrance, but when I get the money into my own hands, I shall restore her to the bosom of her family; and if that is not soon, I am not so smart as I think myself."

Kitty could not read more. She dropped the letter from her trembling fingers. The scales had fallen from her eyes, and she saw her hero in his true light.

If Kitty was silly, she was not a fool, and she could see just now how blind and weak she had been.

But the cars had reached the Norwalk station. Trembling in spite of her strongest efforts, Kitty prepared to face the idol who had fallen so suddenly from his niche in her heart.

But the first person she saw as she left the cars was Ben Appleton. She clung to him frantically, like a frightened child.

"O Ben, take me home! take me home, quick!" she cried.

Ben drew her arm within his own.

"The next train goes in half an hour. We have plenty of time," said he, in as quiet and matter-of-fact a way as if it were an every-day occurrence for Kitty to come up to Norwalk on the train alone,

and beg to be taken back again on the next train!

One glimpse Kitty caught—the last one she ever had—of her would-be husband, Mr. Walter Fortescue. But she drew her veil down, and hurried along, and when he saw her companion, he suddenly disappeared in the crowd.

Very few words passed between Kitty and Ben on their homeward journey. Kitty sobbed, and wondered how she should ever tell her father and mother, and Ben earnestly advised her not to tell them at all.

They dropped the travelling bag down behind a rosebush in the garden, to be smuggled in at some convenient season, and went calmly up on to the porch where the deacon and his wife were sitting.

“La sakes, Kitty! we was beginning to have a good mind to be worried about you—but I told pa I thought likely you and

Ben had gone for a walk!” said Mrs. Sparhawk.

And they never knew. And Mrs. Sparhawk often laughed at “pa” for his silly fancy that Kitty was in love with their boarder!

I don't like to tell you the rest, lest it should lower your opinion of Ben Appleton, for I think myself that Kitty didn't deserve him in the least. But fidelity is not to be found alone in womanly hearts, and Ben would never have loved anybody but Kitty if he had lived a thousand years. So perhaps it is just as well that Kitty is Mrs. Ben Appleton. And when she told me the story she finished with this exclamation: “To think I could ever have been such a fool as to prefer that man to my Ben!” And when she said “my Ben” there was a flush of wifely pride on her face such as you don't often see.

MRS. STEMBRIDGE'S GOVERNESS.

BY FRANCES E. WADLEIGH.

Mrs. Stembridge was a picture of placid content as she sat by a bright, crackling fire, her hands and lap full of rich purple worsted which she was making into an afghan stripe, the royal hue contrasting finely with her gray-silk dress and soft white hands. A large white cat, with a blue ribbon around her neck, lay on a fold of her mistress's robe, dozing and purring alternately.

Both Mrs. Stembridge and Blanchette (the cat) were roused from their half-somnolent meditations by the breezy entrance of a handsome, showy, over-dressed girl, who, dislodging Blanchette by a sudden whisk of her voluminous draperies, flung herself on an ottoman, exclaiming, —

"Ma, what does pa mean by refusing to let me marry Basil Townsend? I think he is acting just as mean as he can."

Instead of rebuking her daughter for these very unfilial words, Mrs. Stembridge replied calmly and soothingly, —

"So do I, dear. But you know what your pa is when he once makes up his mind, — nothing will move him."

"What objection has he to Basil?"

"That he is dissipated and" —

"Oh, pshaw! He's no worse than other young men."

"No, I don't know that he is. Most men would jump at the chance of such a handsome, rich son-in-law. But, there! your pa always was as odd as Dick's hat-band."

"Never mind: I mean to marry Basil, or die an old maid. That will make two in this family."

"Two what, Rosy?"

"Two old maids. There's that little goose, Isidore: she has set her heart on Daymond, and he has eyes for no one but our wishy-washy governess. Men have such queer tastes!"

"Your pa would like him to marry her."

"I dare say. But my paternal's plans regarding his daughters' husbands may not be carried out. Wonder if he knows how Matilda encourages Sam Green?"

"Matilda's low tastes are disgusting! But if you really think Lucia will be in Isi-

dore's way, I must look after her. Daymond is a splendid catch, richer even than Basil; and if Isidore wants him, she must have him, — though seems to me he is very stupid."

Mr. Stembridge had begun life as a butcher on a very small scale. When Matilda (his oldest child) was about thirteen, a lucky speculation and an unexpected legacy enabled him to resign the cleaver, move from Norton to New York, where no one knew his origin, and give his daughters what he called "a good start in life."

The older girls, Matilda, Rosina (named Rose Ann originally), and Isidore (an improvement upon her juvenile name, Dorothy), took kindly to riches, and as they were also blessed with pretty faces, tolerable figures, and a fair amount of education, they were soon the centre of a large circle of gay acquaintances. One of the brightest stars in their firmament was Basil Townsend. What little heart this battered, world-worn fellow yet possessed soon succumbed to Rosina's smiles and charms; but Mr. Stembridge had a few old-fashioned notions, and, preferring an honest mechanic to a dissolute "gentleman," peremptorily refused to sanction the marriage.

The four younger scions of the house were still under the governess, — public schools were entirely too mixed, too plebeian, for them, — and will not figure in this tale. Their instructress, Lucia Edbrooke, was a fine feather in her employer's cap, and, like all the rest of Mrs. Stembridge's feathers, was well paid for. Nothing had value in that lady's eyes which was not expensive. So she gave the girl a large salary simply because it looked well, and because it was "so nice" to have as governess for her children one whose father had been United-States Senator, governor of his native State, and for many years minister to an European court.

Whether Lucia appreciated her position to the same extent that her patroness did is an open question. Mrs. Stembridge would not wantonly harm even a fly; so for three years Lucia was warmly housed, kindly

treated, and amply remunerated. The children were rather good, lovable, and intelligent: so she was not unhappy.

So far as any *words* of Fernando Daymond were concerned, Isidore's jealousy of Lucia was certainly groundless; nor could she accuse her of having in any way attempted to attract his attention: indeed, the two had never exchanged any but the barest civilities, and those at long intervals, during the two years he had been visiting at Mr. Stembridge's house.

Nevertheless, roused by Rosina's hint, Mrs. Stembridge, in her soft, purring way, watched Mr. Daymond closely the next two or three times he called, — much as sleek Blanchette watched a hole that looked suspiciously mousy. Suddenly she made a spring.

"Wait a moment, Miss Edbrooke," she said gently one day, as the last stragglers were leaving the breakfast-table. "I wish to speak to you."

Leading the way to the library, and closing the door, she continued, —

"I fear that what I am about to say will annoy you, my dear Miss Edbrooke; but I think it my duty to you and to Isidore."

"To Isidore?" repeated Lucia, in surprise.

"Yes: of course I must consider her first. I — it — well, I may as well come right to the point: your evident admiration of Mr. Daymond" —

"What! Pray, what do you mean? Have I ever said" —

"Oh, no! Looks speak volumes sometimes, however."

Here Mrs. Stembridge hesitated: she did not want to speak a lie, though she had no scruples about acting one.

"I think if you knew that I hope to have him for a son-in-law soon" —

"Never!" exclaimed Lucia hotly.

"Indeed! And why not? Are you so much in love with him?"

"I in love with him? I hate him," said Lucia.

"On what grounds? I do not think he has obtruded many of his attentions upon you."

"You are correct," replied Lucia scornfully; "but before I ever met him here I had heard of him."

"What did you hear? Do tell me, — for Isidore's sake."

"When Isidore is his wife, I will tell you.

I very much doubt, however, if that marriage ever is consummated."

"Ah! you think you can prevent it. What have you to offer him?"

"Nothing, madam," answered Lucia angrily. "Your insinuations are insulting."

"Hoity toity! I think you forget who you are speaking to, miss," retorted Mrs. Stembridge, also wrathly. "I won't have no one talk so to me in my house."

As you perceive, that lady's knowledge of grammar was but superficial, and failed her completely in moments of excitement.

"I am quite ready to leave your house."

And the next morning she did so, to the genuine grief of her pupils, and the delight of their elder sisters.

If Mr. Daymond noticed her absence from the parlor during the ensuing fortnight, he did not allude to it. He may have thought she was not there because her services as musician were not needed.

But, in spite of all that Mrs. Stembridge and her daughters could do (and they were not idle), he would not propose to Isidore.

Rosina, angry at her father's persistent rejection of Basil Townsend, at last consented to elope with him. This threw the family into such confusion that Lucia's absence was not noticed by any of their acquaintance. At last, after she had been gone about six weeks, Mr. Daymond asked where she was.

"Oh, she has left!" answered Isidore contemptuously. "She and mamma had a disagreement; and she was dreadfully rude."

"Where is she now?"

But that no one knew; or, rather, no one would tell.

"Edbrooke, did you say?" asked a Mr. Palmer, who was present.

He was a stranger in town, and was calling on Matilda, with his brother's wife, one of her old schoolmates.

"Yes: Rufus G. Edbrooke's daughter. Did you ever meet her?" replied Mrs. Stembridge.

"No: but I was once, quite unconsciously, the cause of a great deal of trouble to a namesake of hers, — a cousin, I presume."

"Lucia has no Edbrooke cousins: her father was an orphan," answered Matilda.

"Oh, yes: there was a Lucia" —

"This is Lucia. Her father was for several years minister to —"

"That is singular. The cases seem identical, — yet the one I have reference to is a

Mrs. — Mrs., — well, I forget the name; but I know she was married, for I was at her wedding."

"Married! When? Why does she keep it a secret?—for this must be our Lucia," exclaimed Mrs. Stembridge.

"She was married at her father's death-bed to an old lover with a very uncommon name. They quarreled bitterly fifteen minutes after the ceremony, — which might account for the secrecy."

"But how did you injure her?"

"The light in the room was very dim, and I mistook her for a Miss Brooke" —

"Did n't you know her?"

"No: I was a friend of the officiating clergyman, and was hastily summoned to act as witness. They were all strangers to me, and, mistaking the name, I supposed the bride to be a very fast young woman, named Brooke, who had been flirting to a terrible extent with one of my cousins, and who was also named Lucia. Scarcely was the solemn ceremony over when the clergyman and I took our leave; and I, not knowing that the newly made husband was just behind us, very unwisely repeated a bit of scandal concerning this young lady, as I supposed. I spoke of her simply as Lucia, you must understand. The husband came forward, and telling me that he had heard my tale, insisted upon knowing if it was true, and extorted from me all I knew about her. Even then the error in surname was not noticed by either of us, and I never knew until my return from China last month what an awful blunder I had committed. It seems that Miss Edbrooke was too hurt and too proud to attempt to clear herself from the unfounded charges."

Mr. Daymond, with a face as livid as death, startled every one by saying, —

"Would you remember the bridegroom's name, if you heard it?"

"Think I should, — am sure I should."

"Was it Fernando Idelfonso Daymond?"

"That's it. Name enough to kill a fellow. Do you know him?"

"I am he."

A chorus of "oh's," and "ah's," and "what's" rang through the room.

"Mr. Daymond, I do not know how to apologize to you," said Palmer earnestly. "If my life can atone for my slandering Miss — your wife, I mean, it is at your service."

"Nonsense, man. Duelling is barbarous,

unchristian, and, I am glad to say, obsolete, except, perhaps, among boys and fools. If, however, you could convince Lucia why I so wantonly insulted her that sad evening" —

"My dear fellow," interrupted Palmer, "I will not rest until I have done so. Where is she?"

Again no one knew.

"No matter, — the detective service will aid us," began Mr. Palmer.

But Mrs. Stembridge (who had an ignorant woman's terror of policemen and detectives) interrupted him.

"No, no: don't call in the police. She is in Leighton, staying with Mrs. Gray, the Baptist minister's wife."

"Pray, Mr. Daymond, what excuse have you to offer for your conduct to my sister?" asked Matilda, determined to carry her point in spite of the trifling obstacle of a wife.

"My conduct? Which sister? What do you mean?" exclaimed Daymond,

"You came to us like a wolf in sheep's clothing; passed yourself off for a bachelor, and made love to Isidore."

"Yes: pretty conduct for a married man," chimed in their mother.

"Absurd! My visits were solely on my wife's account. Miss Isidore, you, at least, can absolve me from the charge of making love to you."

"I — I thought you came to see me," Isidore stammered.

"Did I, by word or deed, ever give you reason to think so? I insist upon knowing."

"No," whimpered she, bursting into tears.

"Lucia thought so," exclaimed Matilda.

"Then you told her so, and that is why she left."

No one, in the face of facts, dared to deny it: all looked guilty. Daymond left the house, followed by Palmer, without more words.

The next day the two men called on Lucia, and, with much confusion and overwhelming contrition, Mr. Palmer explained his unfortunate blunder.

"Your explanation is very clear, and I freely forgive you," Lucia answered; "as freely as if it were not too late to avail me any."

"Too late! What do you mean, Lucia?" asked her husband.

"That I shall offer no opposition, if you desire a divorce."

"Good Heaven! I don't want a divorce."

"How can you marry Isidore?"

"Confound Isidore! I never had any idea of such a thing. I love you as dearly now, Lucia, as I did when we were first engaged, five years ago. But I suppose I cannot hope that you will ever forgive me for my insults, my cruel words, that sad night when we were married."

Mr. Palmer had had the sense to leave the room before this, and the two were alone.

If Lucia had had one grain of "proper spirit," if she had preferred her own dignity to her love, I should not have to record the lamentable fact that, instead of spurning his apologies, and steeling her heart against

his sighs and wistful looks, she was weak enough to throw her arms around his neck, and exclaim, as he pressed kiss after kiss on brow, eyes, cheeks and lips, —

"O Fernando! I thought you had ceased to love me long ago; and I was so unhappy. You were so cold, so negligent, when we met at Mrs. Stembridge's."

"And you were so haughty, so very unbending, that I was quite sure you hated me."

"Perhaps I ought to; but — I don't."

Mrs. Stembridge is very fond of talking of her "dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. Daymond, now in Paris;" but she never tells how she and they parted. She hopes that time may soften their feelings, and that when they return they will admit her to their friendship. *Nous verrons.*